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New York

President: Mr. Razali ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Agenda item 96 (*continued*)

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(b) Agenda for development

Report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development (A/51/45)

The President: The Assembly has before it a report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, document A/51/45, and a draft resolution which, for the time being, is contained in paragraph 7 of Part I of document A/AC.250/1.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): Allow me to express my great satisfaction at the conclusion of the work that will lead to the adoption of the Agenda for Development by the General Assembly. We are very grateful to you, Ambassador Razali, and to the Co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Mangoaela and Powles, as well as to their predecessors, for leading us to a successful and timely outcome. We are convinced that all of us have made a contribution to the Agenda for Development. We are pleased to acknowledge the important role played by all delegations and by the Secretariat in the final stages of the negotiations.

For many years, Brazil has stressed the importance of reaffirming in a single document the role of the United Nations in development. Development is, and should remain, one of the main priorities of this Organization, which also has also an overall mandate on peace and security issues. Brazil has been deeply involved in the Agenda for Development since its beginning. We fully supported the Group of 77 initiative to establish the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on this matter. After three years of deliberations, we have finally concluded our work.

The Agenda for Development speaks for itself, but it is always worthwhile to highlight briefly what it represents. It integrates the consensus agreements resulting from major United Nations conferences on development and, for the first time, provides a definition of development. It reaffirms the role of the United Nations in development and provides a framework for reforms in the economic and social fields. In other words, it puts United Nations reforms in the context of the implementation of international commitments on development. Finally, it demonstrates that, whatever differences among countries may persist, there is still a firm commitment by the international community to the realization of development and to the revitalization of the United Nations system in that field.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): Allow me to say a few words on the occasion of this important event marking the completion of the work of the Ad Hoc Open-

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READEX

ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development. Only a few days ago, there was a general uncertainty about whether negotiations in the Group could come to a successful conclusion, given their complexity. We were, however, confident that success was at hand because of your personal involvement, Mr. President, and we are grateful to you and to the two Co-Vice-Chairmen, whose firm hands in steering the negotiations meant the difference between success and failure. May I therefore commend Ambassador Percy Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand for a job well done. May I also refer to the laudable efforts of their predecessors, Ambassador Valéry Mongbé of Benin and Ambassador Peter Osvald of Sweden. It was during the Philippine chairmanship of the Group of 77 that actual negotiations on the Agenda for Development really took off.

My delegation congratulates the Chairman of the Group of 77 for discharging admirably the task of being our lead negotiator. We also pay tribute to all who were involved in the negotiations for their creativeness and patience in working around certain complicated issues, thereby producing mutually acceptable solutions, and we are very appreciative of the support extended by the Secretariat.

We now have an Agenda for Development. This document is a testament to the fact that the United Nations is a vibrant force, directing all that we can together achieve to promote a higher quality of life for all people. This document will certainly invigorate the whole United Nations system and should accord an additional impetus to implementing the outcome of the series of United Nations conferences held in the 1990s. Henceforth, the task before the international community is to go beyond those pious statements in the Agenda for Development. We should all rise to the challenge of making the Agenda for Development a living document, translating into concrete actions those commitments embodied in the carefully and painstakingly crafted paragraphs and agreed by us all. My delegation fully supports the Agenda for Development.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): Let me begin, on behalf of the Indonesian delegation, by sincerely congratulating you, Sir, and the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development on bringing to a successful conclusion this five-year-long marathon of painstaking negotiation on the Agenda for Development. We applaud your dedication, your persistence and your staying power in overcoming the many formidable obstacles and setbacks on the road to achieving agreement on all 287 paragraphs of the draft Agenda. Indeed, many times we doubted that this milestone would ever be reached.

Indonesia has always attached great importance to the promotion of international cooperation for development and the eradication of poverty. In a similar vein, and particularly with the advent of globalization and the liberalization of the world economy, we recognize that an agenda for development is an indispensable blueprint for achieving this end. Moreover, it is also essential for asserting the central role of the United Nations system and its achievements, and, given the recognized indivisibility of peace, security and development as well as the broadening of the concept of development, the need for an agenda for development has taken on a new urgency.

The success in finalizing our negotiations on 14 June should therefore go a long way towards imparting new coherence to the United Nations development system and towards providing us with an effective, integrated approach to promoting international cooperation for development.

Moreover, as we are now on the verge of a new millennium, we sincerely hope that the implementation of the Agenda will not only help to reinforce the importance of development in the United Nations system but will also ensure that development is never again allowed to be marginalized or ignored.

While we celebrate the fact of reaching this truly important benchmark in the history of United Nations efforts in the field of development, it is the next stage — that of implementing the provisions of the Agenda — that could now present us with new, Herculean tasks. Indeed, without effective implementation, our long and arduous effort, spread out over half a decade, could very well go for nought and the documents so diligently negotiated become *lettre morte*.

So let us sincerely work towards ensuring that the positive and constructive spirit of partnership which enabled us to bring the negotiations on the Agenda to a successful conclusion will once again serve us well during this important follow-up of the implementation phase.

In paragraph 283 on the implementation of the Agenda, it is stated that the renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international cooperation for development through partnership should serve as an important mechanism for an intergovernmental follow-up,

assessment and implementation of the Agenda. In this context, we sincerely believe that there can be no alternative to embarking on a constructive dialogue that is essentially based on the imperative of mutual interest and benefit, genuine interdependence, shared responsibility and partnership. It is only through such a dialogue that we can successfully and expeditiously pursue the implementation of the Agenda. Indeed, while it is true that renewal of the dialogue would serve as a critical instrument for implementing the Agenda for Development, it is also true that the Agenda itself could greatly help to provide a supportive framework for actively conducting the dialogue in the United Nations system.

In conclusion, we now look forward to the high-level dialogue, which, as noted in resolution 51/174, will be held for a period of two days during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. During that meeting, the outcome of the implementation of the Agenda for Development will be focused upon. We hope that the preparation for this discussion will be urgently undertaken as soon as possible, and we sincerely urge all Member States actively to participate in this first critical, high-level dialogue on the Agenda's implementation.

Mr. Pal (India): My delegation joins earlier speakers in expressing our appreciation to you, Sir, to the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group on an Agenda for Development and to their predecessors, whose devotion and hard work were crucial elements in the conclusion of this Agenda. I should also like to place on record our appreciation for the contributions made by all delegations during the long and sometimes arduous process of the negotiations.

Globalization, with enhanced communications and information flows, increased mobility of capital, trade and technology, has produced new avenues for sustained economic growth. At the same time, it has clearly been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and, consequent to these, social problems. Economic growth by itself has not meant much to vast sections who live in poverty, without shelter, in hunger and deprivation. The challenge is to change the very concept of growth and development. We have to work for the upliftment of our people in the largest sense and to eliminate poverty and the misery and indignity associated with it.

India was happy to see the international community focusing its energies on these crucial issues at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. The common minimum programme of the Government of India foresees the formulation of development strategies on the premise that economic and social policies, and indeed all policies, must subserve the primacy of the human being and in particular the poorest among them. All people should have a share in the dividends of economic prosperity. Weaker sections cannot be mere spectators to the enjoyment of the fruits of progress only by those who are already more advantageously placed.

It is clear that market forces and growth alone may not be adequate and an interventionist approach to guarantee social justice is important. Any model of development based on uneven rewards will not be supported by those who are not beneficiaries of the growth strategy. Historically, this has always led to stress on the social fabric.

The credibility of any growth strategy has to be based on the full participation by all members of society in its formulation, implementation and in the benefits it brings. To face these challenges, we should not merely react but develop the necessary concepts, strategies and initiatives that will enable us to exert a direct and vigorous influence on the shaping of the world of the future.

The development I mentioned and the needs, priorities, capacities and potential of developing countries should be at the centre of any global vision for the coming decades. What is of prime importance is to have a clear vision and the commitment to implement it through intensified dialogue and interaction in a spirit of shared partnership and cooperation. Without this, the processes of globalization and deregulation and the prosperity, stability and security that they are expected to usher in will neither materialize nor be sustained.

Growth with equity, economic development with social justice and, in the final analysis, the creation of a world where there is less injustice and greater happiness is of the greatest importance. We trust that the adoption of the Agenda for Development and its full implementation will lead to the creation of such a world.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): It is a great tribute to you, Sir, to our two Co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand, and also to the spirit of cooperation and compromise which generally existed among participants of the Working Group that we have now concluded our work on an agenda for development. The undefined has now become defined, and we now have a document

which provides a framework for international economic cooperation among Member States of the United Nations for the rest of this century and, hopefully, beyond.

When we embarked upon the elaboration of the Agenda some four years ago, little did we know where our efforts would lead. Some will recall that the first report of the then-Secretary-General generated a feeling that the exercise needed to be less analytic and more action-oriented, and, if truth be told, there was also the view that by comparison with the Agenda for Peace, which was born of the high parentage of the Security Council, an agenda for development was destined to become a poor orphan, deprived of any real sustenance. It will be remembered that then the Assembly intervened, asking the Economic and Social Council and myself, as President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, to submit additional views for incorporation in a further report by the Secretary-General.

The hearings of development which were held in June 1994 provided a rich palette of proposals on what development was about and what the role of the United Nations should be in a changing world. There was a notable perception among most participants, who came from all corners of the Earth, that present arrangements were far from being adequate and such was the frustration of some that they called for a complete overhaul of the United Nations system.

Mere tinkering with the Organization was not considered an option. There were thus urgent calls for a new body, perhaps an economic and security council or some high-level development council that would match the Security Council in power and prestige. And equally important, there were pleas for a new partnership between developed and developing countries based on the twin pillars of interdependence and mutual benefit.

Sad to say, however, we must all recognize that the fervour which was generated then diminished with time. We reverted to the confrontation of the committee rooms and to the intense bargaining which is so peculiar to the negotiation of international agreements in this house.

Yet it must be recognized that representatives in the Group spared neither time nor energy in exploring the outer limits of agreement. To them and the co-Chairmen who have spearheaded our discussions over these many long months goes the credit for forging the document we have today. As always, the Secretariat played an invaluable role in facilitating our work, and to its hard-working officials I extend our sincere thanks. As the representative of a small developing country which tried its best to participate in the work, I would be remiss in my duty were I not to express our deep gratitude to all the Chairmen of the Group of 77 — and especially now the Ambassador of Tanzania — and to the officials who have brought us to the end of our labour.

Undoubtedly, there will be differing views on the value of this document. Many will see the glass as half full, others as half empty, continuing to believe that more could have been had. But I myself felt sincerely that the time had come when we had to ask ourselves seriously whether, as the French saying goes, the game was worth the candle. And an honest answer to that question would be to accept the fact that there was little hope on the horizon of any significant improvement in the foreseeable future. In any case, events — such as the tabling of the Secretary-General's proposals for reform on 17 July — will probably overtake some of our thinking, and it is therefore just as well that we have finalized the text for adoption now.

In conclusion, let me say, however, that our task is far from done. We must now work as an Assembly to give life to the words that have been so meticulously forged and to translate into reality the many proposals which have been advanced in service to development. Too often, as delegates in this house, we seem content with having drafted a language of agreement without much care for its subsequent implementation. The means, in fact, becomes the end. Were we to do this in this case, we would be doing an immense disservice not only to the poor and disadvantaged of the world, but to ourselves as their representatives in this Organization. Therefore, as we congratulate ourselves today in our accomplishment, I would very much hope that we will not rest until we address in detail and in reality the very urgent challenges of development which face our poor countries in the highly competitive marketplace of our global village.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): After two and a half years of painstaking negotiations, the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development has finally accomplished its mission. I should like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to you, Sir, and to the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group for the considerable amount of work you did during the negotiation process.

Like other Member States, China has made its own contribution to the adoption of the Agenda today, which is a significant event for the United Nations system. We all remember that the General Assembly decided to elaborate an agenda for development because it wished to reverse the unhealthy trend within the Organization of placing greater emphasis on peace than on development. It also wished to bring development and peace together at the centre of the United Nations agenda, effectively to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of development, and to contribute to the advancement of international development cooperation and to the promotion of the development of all countries, especially the developing countries.

The adoption of the Agenda for Development in no way implies that these goals have been achieved; it is only the first step on the road to their attainment. Thus, while we rejoice over the adoption of the Agenda, we must keep a cool head and realize that the more important and more arduous task lies ahead: the effective implementation of the Agenda.

The Agenda for Development must be implemented in an integrated and comprehensive way. There should be no selective or one-sided interpretation and implementation at the whim of certain countries alone. In particular, attention should be paid to the means of its implementation through the effective solution of the problems of resources and technological transfer. This will require the developed countries, especially the major ones, to demonstrate true political good will and to honour their own commitments. If they do not, however well written the Agenda may be, it will be worth no more than the paper it is printed on.

We wish to cooperate closely with all countries and to translate text into reality.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) *interpretation from French*): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on the important step we are about to take. My delegation remains convinced that this General Assembly would not be meeting here today to adopt the Agenda for Development without the skilful and firm determination shown by you and, of course, by your Co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Michael Powles of New Zealand and Ambassador Percy Mangoaela of Lesotho.

The Assembly launched this initiative more than 50 months ago, aware that our efforts at that time to update our approaches to peace and security would be meaningless unless they went hand in hand with a similar exercise in the field of development. We thus initiated a far-reaching dialogue aimed at adapting our collective thinking about development to the realities of a rapidly changing world.

(*spoke in English*)

That dialogue has gone on longer and has at times been more difficult than, I suspect, any of us had anticipated. And the final product, being the result of significant compromise on all sides, doubtless falls short of our original expectations.

With the benefit of hindsight, we should not be surprised by our limited accomplishments. No less than in the sphere of peace and security, the consideration of our approaches to the vastly complex challenges of development must clearly be an ongoing task. Indeed, the United Nations must engage in a continuous process of recalibrating its agenda to meet constantly dynamic challenges. The Agenda for Development we are adopting today is essentially but a snapshot of that work-in-progress.

Through the historic series of recent United Nations conferences to which the Agenda for Development process has paid witness, the international community has made great strides in identifying basic priorities and imperatives for the pursuit of sustainable human development in today's world. The process of updating these priorities and assessing progress in meeting them will be taken up anew at next week's special session on Agenda 21 and in similar reviews of follow-up to Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing.

This chapter of our work-in-progress is being completed as the Secretary-General prepares to present a set of major reform measures to the Assembly next month. We hope our action today will encourage him to include significant proposals for strengthening the development operations of the United Nations. I want to assure the Secretary-General of Canada's continuing support in this undertaking, and I pledge our cooperation to all members of this Assembly as we seek to give concrete impetus to the aspirations set out in the Agenda for Development.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Everyone knows the phrase, "all's well that ends well". It applies to today's events. Almost four years have passed since work began on the Agenda for Development, during which we had our ups and downs. There were times when the very fate of this document hung by a thread. But today, that is all behind us.

The United Nations was awaiting this document, and its appearance on the eve of the special session of the General Assembly on environment and development is most timely. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development is the first of the General Assembly reform groups to complete its work. Much was said during work on the Agenda about the man in the street and his possibly complicated attitude towards the Agenda for Development. Of course, we have before us a United Nations text with specific language, and to make use of it requires some special intellectual preparation.

But the main thing is that the Agenda has turned out to be a balanced document reflecting the interests of all groups of countries. It frames the decisions taken in recent years at various United Nations global forums, and does so within a broad consensus on development issues.

Much has been said in recent years about the marginalization of our world Organization, but, in our view, the adoption of the Agenda for Development may have demolished such arguments. The ideas set out in the Agenda place the United Nations at the centre of international cooperation for development.

We would like to express our gratitude for the cooperation of our negotiating partners from the North, the South, the East and the West. We thank the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Razali, for his clear perseverance and his political acumen, which were of help during the delicate period when the very fate of the Agenda was under threat. We thank the former Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Mongbé and Osvald. Special esteem must be accorded the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassadors Mangoaela and Powles; their dedication, consistency, wisdom and optimism carried us through what were the most hopeless stages of the negotiations, thereby earning authority and the genuine respect of the participants.

I must say something also about the positive role played by the Secretariat and emphasize the professionalism, effectiveness and reliability of the staff, who embodied the high standards of United Nations staff members.

Let me say in conclusion that the adoption of the Agenda for Development has demonstrated one extremely important thing: we can reach agreements, in spite of complicated obstacles and the exigencies of group and national interests. We do not wish to idealize the Agenda, but there is a hope that the spirit of cooperation and understanding will guide us in future negotiations, because there are no opponents of development; there are only various approaches to it. We have found consensus: the Agenda for Development. Now let us try with perseverance to work in a spirit of genuine partnership in implementing this consensus.

Mr. Soal (South Africa): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on this auspicious occasion: the successful conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development and on the adoption of the Agenda for Development. You have once again demonstrated your leadership qualities, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group, in ensuring that the entire United Nations membership saw and recognized the value of the successful completion of the Group's deliberations.

I would like also to congratulate your two Vice-Chairmen, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Ambassador Percy Mangoaela, and the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Michael Powles. By ensuring at a working level that the Ad Hoc Working Group completed its work and adopted and approved of the outcome of its drawn-out deliberations, the two Vice-Chairmen also have rightly earned our high esteem and great admiration.

I would also like to commend the two preceding Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group, the former Permanent Representative of Benin, Ambassador René Valéry Mongbé, and the Permanent representative of Sweden, Ambassador Peter Osvald. Perhaps theirs was the more thankless task, but they helped to lay the necessary foundation without which the conclusion of the work of the Working Group would have been well-nigh impossible.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement that will be made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this matter.

South Africa believes that today's formal adoption of the Agenda for Development by the General Assembly represents an important milestone in the emergence and evolution of a critical global consensus on development matters in general and on the role of the United Nations

in development matters in particular. Our collective search for a meaningful and fruitful global partnership for growth and development has again been enhanced by our adoption of the Agenda for Development. That the entire membership of the United Nations could reach an agreement on a matter so complex is testimony to the ability of the entire United Nations family of nations to rise to the occasion and to allow the dynamics of consensus-building to foster global partnership.

We, the United Nations Member States and observer States, have agreed to adopt the Agenda for Development, thus holding forth a global promissory note and universal hope for the millions of our people throughout the entire world who daily go without sufficient food and water, who battle diseases and natural disasters, who cannot read or write, who lack shelter, who are jobless, whose entire lives are stunted and who are deprived of the simple pleasures of human existence because of poverty.

As South Africa embarks on its long, difficult but exciting journey from being a society based on the division and bitterness of racial inequalities, religion and gender to being a truly rainbow African nation based on the non-racist and non-sexist creed that seeks continuously and energetically to address its inherited imbalances, South Africans will look up to this Agenda for Development as a beacon of hope.

As our continent, Africa, also embarks on its momentous and promising journey into the twenty-first century, the Agenda for Development can be regarded by all Africans as a constant companion providing the capacity to triumph over adversities. Indeed the adoption of the Agenda for Development serves as a basis upon which Member States and the international community can face the challenge before us with hope and optimism.

Mr. Nishigahiro (Japan): My delegation, too, wholeheartedly welcomes the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development. We hope that this successful result, after hard negotiations lasting for more than two years, will provide a positive impetus to the work of other working groups dealing with the reform of the United Nations. My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, and salute the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand, for their tireless efforts, which have made it possible for the Group to bring its work to a successful conclusion. We also would like to express our appreciation to the former bureau members for their valuable contributions.

The conclusion of our work in the Group is certainly a milestone in the efforts of the United Nations to address the issue of development. We cannot believe, however, that the Agenda itself can be the conclusion of our work. Our efforts to address this issue, which is of the utmost importance to the United Nations in the economic and social areas, should continue to evolve and extend beyond the conclusion of the Agenda itself. The United Nations must now proceed simultaneously on two fronts.

First of all, it should move quickly to adopt a new and innovative approach to development, and then commence active efforts to implement it. A new development strategy based on global partnership, which my Government has advocated would, in our view, be most effective. Under this strategy, the international community would establish a common set of targets, and developing countries, based upon their ownership of their own development, would then establish plans for achieving them. Their subsequent efforts to implement those plans would be complemented by well-coordinated assistance from developed countries, international organizations, the private sector and civil society itself. Although the individual parts of this approach may not be entirely new, having already been adopted in various international forums and carried out by the international community, they have never been incorporated into an organic whole in the form of a comprehensive strategy; that is precisely what needs to be done.

Secondly, the United Nations should reform itself in the economic and social fields so that it may be better able to join in the serious ongoing efforts that are being made with regard to the issue of development. There will be no progress in United Nations reform without constructive dialogue between developed and developing countries. When we say "United Nations reform", the word "reform" should not be a euphemism for budget reduction. In this connection, we particularly support the inclusion of paragraph 271 in the Agenda, as it encompasses the idea of reinvesting savings from improved cost effectiveness in high-priority development programmes. Japan took the initiative in incorporating this idea into the communiqué adopted at the Group of Seven summit in Lyon last year. The idea is expected to be reaffirmed at the Denver summit of the Eight, which starts today. The Secretary-General also incorporated this idea into his reform plan announced last March, and we

look forward to receiving his specific proposals for developing it further.

In adopting the Agenda for Development, on which we have spent much time and energy, my delegation would like to emphasize the need to proceed on the two fronts to which I have just referred so that we can move beyond it. We should not be satisfied merely with the adoption of the document, which is the result of lengthy negotiation. Although the work is concluded, it has become apparent in the course of negotiations that the dialogue in which development partners engage needs to be further strengthened if we are to achieve a vision of development shared by all. Efforts still need to be made at the United Nations to define a new development strategy based on a new global partnership between developed and developing countries.

Mr. Agam (Malaysia): My delegation would like to join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, and your Co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand, for the successful conclusion of your work. Without a doubt, you and the two Vice-Chairmen have been the driving and motivating force of this Working Group. We would also like to express our appreciation to the previous Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group for their contributions in moving the process forward during their stewardship. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all those delegations who contributed to the work of the Working Group, as well as to the staff of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts in support of the Working Group over the years.

The adoption of the Agenda for Development is of historic importance to the international community. It has been carefully and painstakingly crafted through a process of exhaustive consultations and discussions over the last two years or more. The document embodies the hopes and aspirations of the international community, as well as the programmes of action that will guide it in the future development process. This positive outcome, which many thought was almost unthinkable only a few weeks ago, is indeed a remarkable achievement and is testimony to our common endeavours and commitments towards attaining one of the main priorities of the United Nations: that of development in all its aspects.

The adoption of the Agenda for Development is important in that it has underscored the continued relevance and pivotal role of the United Nations in development in a way which will enhance both the effectiveness of its own interventions and its ability to develop well-defined positions, contributing to improved coordination within the United Nations system. By promoting a more comprehensive and effective approach to development, and refocusing — indeed, reasserting — the centrality of the role of the United Nations, the Agenda will further the objective of greater coherence in the development activities of the United Nations as a whole.

In this context, the forging of a close relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, as highlighted in the Agenda, is of critical importance in the attainment of the overall goals, as is the need for improved coordination in the work of the agencies concerned. Of course the attainment of its goals will depend on many factors, not least of which will be the vital role and contribution of each and every Member State, both developed and developing, in the implementation of this comprehensive but realistic Agenda. Clearly, the attainment of these goals will be predicated on a mutually beneficial partnership of all Member States, particularly between those of the North and those of the South.

With this important breakthrough, it is perhaps not unrealistic to anticipate progress in the open-ended working groups on United Nations reform. It is certainly the hope of my delegation that the success of the Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Development will inspire the other open-ended working groups to try their utmost to bring their work to an early and successful conclusion, however difficult or hopeless it may appear to be at this point.

Mr. Acha (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate all those actively involved in the process that has brought about the Agenda for Development.

We should like to introduce into our debate in this room three considerations at this crucial and significant moment for the United Nations system and for the international community as a whole. First, it is in the interests of all countries, both developing and developed, for this Agenda for Development to be effectively implemented and for follow-up and periodic evaluation to take place. The implementation of such follow-up will depend on the political will of the entire international community. It will also require the broad dissemination of information about the Agenda for Development.

Secondly, we believe that the current exercise of evaluating the implementation of the Rio commitments and of subsequent development conferences requires an integrated approach. We wish to take advantage of this meeting to express our full support for the work begun by the Secretariat on the integrated follow-up of the various United Nations summit meetings. We believe that this will be a fundamental step towards the implementation, and in the process of implementation, of the Agenda for Development, which largely summarizes the principal agreements reached over the past decade in connection with United Nations development conferences.

Thirdly — and this is my last point — we would like to emphasize another key element: the system of United Nations funds and programmes. In the spirit of the Agenda for Development, these funds must operate in a coordinated way, but it would be very dangerous to try to merge them into a single fund.

In conclusion, we would like to note the interest of all the developing countries in continuing to participate in these funds and programmes, whose contribution supports precisely the overall development perspective that we all are hoping for from the Agenda.

Ms. Yoo (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by expressing the congratulations of my delegation to you, Sir, and to all the delegations that worked very hard to make possible the adoption of the Agenda for Development. Even though towards the end of the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, the meetings and negotiations may have become challenging, the will and determination of all involved to reach a successful outcome never diminished.

In this regard, we pay special tribute to you, Sir, and to the two Co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand, for their impressive leadership and catalytic role in helping guide us towards the final text of an agenda for development, which we welcome today.

We are most pleased that agreement could finally be reached on compromise language concerning the more complicated issues under discussion, such as the definition of development and resource mobilization. We fully support this final text of the Agenda and believe that it forms an invaluable articulation of the principles which can serve to guide the United Nations role in development into the next century.

We feel confident that today's completion of the Agenda for Development will help to inject new momentum into efforts to strengthen international cooperation for development; enhance the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system in that task; and promote an integrated approach to development.

Although the Working Group's task may now be complete, we stand committed to ensuring that the progress we have achieved can continue and that the Agenda can be faithfully implemented.

Today we mark the successful closing of one chapter in our work on development at the United Nations, but really we are also heralding a new beginning, and as we move forward in seeking further to strengthen international cooperation for development, particularly through the United Nations, I wish to assure you, Sir, that the Republic of Korea will continue to be an active and committed supporter of this effort.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of part I of document A/AC.250/1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution contained in paragraph 7 of part I of document A/AC.250/1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/240).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Palacio (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina wishes to join in the congratulations expressed on the fulfilment of the task of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development and on the adoption of the Agenda for Development. In this connection, we wish to make an interpretative statement and to express reservations on the following points in the document.

First, we would like to comment on the manner in which the Agenda for Development deals with previous United Nations conferences and on the fact that it makes no mention of the reports of those conferences, given that those reports contain reservations expressed or interpretative statements made by my Government and other Governments when the reports were adopted at those conferences.

Secondly, we have an interpretation of section E of chapter II of the document. In this connection, my delegation would like to reaffirm that whatever references to population control may be found in the text that are related to sexuality, including reproductive health, should not be interpreted as restrictions on the right to life or as any waiver of the condemnation of abortion as a method of birth control or population planning. We base this statement on our national Constitution, which, in article 75, paragraph 23, refers specifically to this question of the condemnation of abortion; on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and on paragraph 41 of the Vienna Programme of Action. None of the proposals contained in the Agenda for Development should be interpreted as justifying programmes for the sterilization of men or women as approaches to the elimination of poverty.

In conclusion, we would like this statement to be included in the official records of this meeting of the General Assembly.

Ms. Darmanin (Malta): May I join others in congratulating you and the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, Ambassador Powles of New Zealand and Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho, on the good work undertaken in the finalization of this Agenda.

In welcoming the adoption of the Agenda for Development, the delegation of Malta would like to state its understanding that reference to the platforms and programmes of action adopted by the United Nations conferences is to be interpreted as consistent with the reports to those conferences.

Further, with respect to chapter II, section E, of the Agenda, Malta reserves its position on the use of the term "reproductive health". The Government of Malta is fully committed to the provision of reproductive health services, excluding abortion. The interpretation given by Malta to the term "reproductive health" is consistent with national legislation, which considers the termination of pregnancy through induced abortion as illegal. We would like this statement to be duly reflected in the official records of the Assembly.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): I am greatly honoured to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at this historic moment of concluding the successful process of preparing an agenda for development.

At the outset, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for your initiatives and commitment, Sir, which have greatly contributed to the realization of this outcome. Your consistent and persistent encouragement and guidance facilitated and generated the much-needed political will and enthusiasm from all Member States to continue with the negotiations and discussions and eventually to attain the product which we have just adopted.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to the Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group on an Agenda for Development, Ambassador Percy Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Michael Powles of New Zealand, for their outstanding work in conducting, guiding and propelling the negotiations amidst an apparent wide gap between the negotiating groups and countries. Their patience, perseverance and proposals greatly facilitated agreement and understanding between the negotiators on the most controversial issues. This successful conclusion of the process can be attributed to their enduring commitment and efforts.

We would also like to recognize the outstanding work done by the former Co-Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mongbé of Benin and Ambassador Osvald of Sweden.

The history of the task of preparing an agenda for development is well known to all of us here. Members will recall that the Group of 77 and China were the main initiators for launching the proposal and continued to be the main protagonists during the last four years. Members will also recall that the imperative was premised on the increasing realization that development was being marginalized in the mainstream and priorities of the intergovernmental processes of the United Nations system. The complementary linkage and balance between peace and development were being lost. The process of globalization was and is becoming more acute and the increasing marginalization of developing countries in the

global economy was becoming a reality, especially in the critical areas of international trade, money, finance, technology, information and communication flows.

Indeed, with all of these trends and tendencies in the world economy, it was recognized by both developed and developing countries, States Members of the United Nations, that it was imperative to launch an endeavour of charting a framework of objectives and measures for national and international actions to address development more squarely and comprehensively than any other previous initiative undertaken by the United Nations.

The outcome of that resolve, which we have just endorsed, is one of the best attempts of the States Members of the United Nations to tackle compelling and important issues in international cooperation for development in the recent past. Fundamentally, the agreed Agenda for Development provides a framework on principles, objectives, measures and actions which would guide Member States in addressing development issues at the national and international levels in a comprehensive manner and in the medium and long terms.

The package of elements contained in the document is in no way exhaustive, but in the main it incorporates many of the basic ideas and proposals that are crucial and of great concern to developing countries. First, there is a need to evolve a genuine partnership which recognizes the inequality and disadvantaged situation of the developing countries in the global economy and thus an imperative for the developed countries to have the much-needed political will to support the development efforts of developing countries through the provision of concessional financial flows, preferential treatment in market access, durable debt-relief measures, favourable terms in the transfer of technology and support for South-South cooperation.

Secondly, the functioning and operations of the United Nations system should be more efficient and effective to maximize its impact in development activities in developing countries. Towards this end, the provision of predictable resources and institutional reforms are crucial.

Thirdly, developing countries should own their development process by assuming leadership in formulating strategies and policies and in determining the priority programmes, projects and activities, with the donor community and the United Nations system playing the supportive and advisory roles through their provision of financial and technical assistance.

While we celebrate this fruitful outcome, it is befitting also to record some of the elements of disquiet, in the view of G-77 and China, which to some extent have reduced the clarity and dynamism of the document. First, the lack of explicit acknowledgement that the deficient and unpredictable provision of resources, especially external resources — in particular, ODA flows and the core resources of funds and programmes — has been and is the main constraint in dynamizing the development process of developing countries.

Secondly, there is an apparent emphasis on the idea that the United Nations system would function more efficiently and effectively, primarily, through a rigorous reform process. Furthermore, this reform process seems to target more specifically the United Nations entities which undertake tasks that are of great interest to developing countries.

Thirdly, the definition of development is much more heavily tilted towards the components of environmental protection and management. Fourthly, the commitment of developed countries to fulfilling the agreed United Nations targets, especially on resource flows, is equivocal. Fifthly, the supremacy of the General Assembly in policy guidance has not yet been ascertained with regard to its relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions. Lastly, there has been an apparent overdose on the values and norms of development, while the special and unique characteristics of a country are belittled.

Certainly, the preparatory process of the Agenda for Development has imparted very useful lessons for the future negotiations. It has provided that the more genuine emerging partnership between developed and developing countries will overcome any degree of pessimism and delusion which may surface in an unprecedented and prolonged negotiation such as this, which has taken three years. We witnessed the exercise of flexibility, pragmatism and realism from all sides. We hope that the negotiating atmosphere which we generated in charting this Agenda will continue to prevail in all the future intergovernmental processes and dialogues.

We have realized that all the major political, economic, social and cultural problems of the world can be tackled meaningfully when development is fully addressed by developed and developing countries alike, as guided by the Agenda for Development. If this Agenda is to be implemented most effectively, political commitment is the most critical requirement. Developing countries are ready and committed to implementing the Agenda fully.

in the expectation that our development partners will also play their part fully.

Before I end my remarks, allow me to congratulate also all of our development partners — the European Union, Mexico, Canada, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and others — for their untiring efforts to negotiate and propose ideas which made it possible to conclude the preparatory work and produce this document on an Agenda for Development.

I should also thank the States members of the Group of 77 and China for honouring my country with the leadership in the negotiations with our partners. Surely, without their cooperation, encouragement and understanding, the ending of the preparatory process could not be this joyous and beautiful. I thank them all.

Last but not the least, I thank the Secretariat for working very hard to facilitate the negotiations. I would like to mention in particular Mr. Johan Scholvinck and Ms. Marion Barthelemy for their tireless efforts in providing documents and clarifications. I would also like to thank the interpreters and all the staff of the Secretariat who were working behind the scenes to facilitate our task.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Iceland and Liechtenstein have also aligned themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of the Agenda for Development by the General Assembly. The European Union emphasizes the strategic importance of achieving an agreement on the Agenda, for a number of reasons. First, the Agenda, building upon the results of the major United Nations conferences, reflects in an integrated and consolidated manner development issues in a global context that has changed dramatically in recent years. Secondly, it gives guidance as to how the United Nations should adapt to this changed world. Thirdly, adopting the Agenda should contribute to a renewed commitment to international cooperation for development and to the United Nations role in this area, and should strengthen the credibility of the Organization. And finally, the agreement may have a beneficial effect on the negotiations for the upcoming special session, which might otherwise have suffered from a lack of agreement on some of the key issues on its agenda.

Whether the Agenda contains sufficient value or value-added on substance remains to be assessed. In a few instances, texts in the Agenda were already agreed upon more than a year ago, and these may have lost some of their topicality. In other cases, there were attempts to take some steps back from recent agreements. The European Union emphasizes in particular the consensus on the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights. Nevertheless, the European Union believes that, on balance, chapters I and II seem to contain a reasonably solid conceptual basis.

We had hoped that it would have been possible to inject chapter III, on institutional issues and follow-up, with more far-reaching views in order to adapt the United Nations as an organization and as an intergovernmental forum to present-day realities in the social, economic and related fields. The outcome in that respect is very modest indeed, but fortunately does not close the door on urgently needed changes for a stronger and more focused United Nations as an agent for development. The importance of the Agenda will depend on the follow-up given to its main components by the membership of the United Nations.

The European Union regrets that the process towards the Agenda has been far too lengthy. At its closure, we are, however, satisfied that it has finally been possible to bring this process to a positive end. On behalf of the European Union, I would like to express our thanks and admiration first to you, Mr. President, for energizing the work of the Working Group when needed, then especially to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand, as well as to their predecessors, Ambassador Mongbé of Benin and Ambassador Osvald of Sweden, for the way in which they conducted the negotiations. Equally, we applaud the tireless efforts of the Secretariat and the very high quality of its support. And finally, we express our appreciation to those countries which have consistently and continuously believed in the Agenda and which helped push us towards this result.

Mr. Marrero (United States of America): The Agenda for Development symbolizes the efforts of Member States, over more than three years, to come to consensus in the General Assembly on fundamental development issues. It reflects an endeavour by all countries to focus on the need to achieve a high quality of life for all people. In so doing, the Agenda for Development carries on the themes and conclusions of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and

Development and subsequent United Nations conferences. Most important, the Agenda for Development embodies the consensus of the international community that development means sustainable development; that is, that improving the quality of life of all people, in both present and future generations, requires integrating economic development, social development and environmental protection, which, as the international community has declared and reaffirmed in various consensus documents, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. These understandings confirm that though the specific details of integrating economic, social and environmental objectives and policies may vary from country to country, we have one common paradigm, and that is sustainable development.

The United States reaffirms its commitment under Agenda 21 to the empowerment and full participation of civil society. We underline in particular the critical role of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the critical role of women in the achievement of sustainable development. We recognize in particular the contribution of local authorities to the implementation of Agenda 21 and support the promotion of local Agenda 21 initiatives. We consider these to be essential to sustainable development.

With respect to paragraph 57, the United States believes that it is essential for countries to have in place strong and effective environment laws and policies providing for high levels of protection in order to help ensure that trade liberalization contributes to sustainable development. The United States further understands the language at the end of the second sentence of paragraph 57 to mean that measures adopted for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade.

We understand that references to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) or its role or functions are solely in the context of its established areas of activity as set forth in the instrument of the GEF.

With respect to paragraphs 194, 214 and 286, the United States wishes to reiterate the standing policy we have expressed on every occasion where we have joined consensus on similar references. The United States is not among those countries that have affirmed or undertaken an overseas development assistance target. Rather than accepting such a target, we believe it is more important to focus efforts on effectiveness and quality of aid and on the policies of the recipient country. The United States has traditionally been among the largest aid donors in volume terms and will continue to provide high-quality aid on a case-by-case basis, in a way that encourages reform efforts in developing countries.

The United States also takes note that the Agenda for Development was negotiated as a whole and reflects an overall balance. Reference to particular language of this document must retain this balance and context. This particularly applies to the interdependent elements in paragraph 1.

The consensus on the Agenda for Development could not have been achieved without the leadership of the various Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group over the years. We would like to thank especially the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Razali, and Ambassadors Mangoaela and Powles and their predecessors, Ambassadors Osvald and Mongbé, for their relentless efforts to conclude this document.

Of course, the dedication of the Secretariat through many drafts was also critical to the success of this process. Most important, we commend the cooperation and partnership between all the delegations from developing and developed countries, North, South, East and West, that forged a partnership which recognizes that, while there are differences among countries, there is a common goal to achieve sustainable development throughout the world. We are proud to have been a part of that process and to have participated in it.

Mr. Hamdan (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Lebanese delegation would first like to applaud our important achievement in having just adopted the Agenda for Development after almost three years of discussion. We would like to join earlier speakers in paying tribute to you, Mr. President, to the two Vice-Chairmen, and to all those whose efforts led to this achievement. We support the statement made earlier by the spokesman for the Group of 77 and China.

Paragraph 34 of the Agenda for Development refers to major conferences and meetings held by the international community over the past five years. Paragraph 35 states that all States and international organizations should fully implement the internationally agreed targets reached at those conferences. We should like to reaffirm here that those references, and similar references in paragraphs elsewhere in that document, do not annul the statements made and reservations expressed by Lebanon on those occasions. We should like to

reaffirm the fact that those declarations and reservations remain valid.

My delegation would like the text of this statement to be included in the official report of this meeting.

Mr. Eltinay (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation would like to join with previous speakers in expressing its deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the two Vice-Chairmen for your great efforts, which have led to the successful outcome of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group, in continuation of the process started by your predecessors, Mr. Amara Essy and Mr. Do Amaral, and by Ambassadors Mongbé and Osvald. I should like to explain further the position elaborated by the Ambassador of Tanzania, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Given the great importance we attach to the question of development and international cooperation, my delegation joined the consensus of the General Assembly in adopting the report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group. My delegation reaffirms its support for this report and for all the international conferences that have been held during the past five years. These constitute a new pattern of relations in the post-cold war period, and we look forward to its being continued. The right to development should be strengthened, and should not be applied on a political and selective basis. However, the report also refers to the programmes of action of the Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and it should be understood that the reservations expressed by my delegation with regard to some of the paragraphs contained in those programmes of action, which contradict the religious values prevailing in my country, remain valid.

I hope that this statement will be reflected in the verbatim record of this meeting.

Ms. Corado (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to join with the other speakers who have expressed congratulations for the dedication and hard work shown by you, Mr. President, and the Co-Vice-Chairmen, the Ambassador of New Zealand and the Ambassador of Lesotho, who were pivotal to the successful outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development and to the formal adoption of the Agenda. We also congratulate Tanzania, which currently holds the chairmanship of the Group of 77, and its predecessor, Costa Rica, for their untiring work during the negotiations.

My delegation believes that the official adoption of the Agenda for Development is of great importance because it reaffirms the role that the United Nations plays in development. The Agenda is also a valuable guide to the principles that must govern the Organization in matters of development. However, we also believe that the commitments entered into at the highest level at the major United Nations conferences must be preserved and reaffirmed. That is why we wish any references to the major United Nations conferences to be in keeping with the reports that were adopted at those conferences.

We should like this statement to form part of the official record of the meeting.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia): My delegation is pleased to be associated with the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution in document A/AC.250/1 (Part I), relating to the Agenda for Development. The adoption of the draft resolution would not have been possible, Mr. President, without your wise guidance and spirited involvement in the negotiating process. You have once more demonstrated your belief that the work of the General Assembly should achieve positive results and be carried out on a timely basis. In the same vein, I would like to extend my delegation's sincere congratulations to your two able Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mangoaela of Lesotho and Ambassador Powles of New Zealand, who worked tirelessly for long, frustrating hours to achieve consensus on the document. No doubt their hard work was inspired by the fine examples set by their predecessors, Ambassador Mongbé of Benin and Ambassador Osvald of Sweden. We also thank them for their excellent work.

Negotiations on this document over the last four years have not only been difficult and expansive in scope, but have been carried out in an atmosphere characterized by level-headedness, patience, understanding and a deep sense of commitment to the United Nations development mandate, including the commitments reached at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and the outcome of other major United Nations conferences.

If the preparation and adoption of the document presented difficulties, its implementation will require greater effort and enduring commitment on our part. Today the international economic situation, especially within the context of liberalization and globalization, should inspire and enhance development cooperation between developing and developed countries, between

rich and poor countries, and also between big and small nations.

I therefore call on all parties to support the document and participate fully and meaningfully in the implementation of the Agenda for Development.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I wish to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Lesotho, Ambassador Percy Mangoaela, and the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Michael Powles, as Co-Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, for successfully steering the Group to a productive outcome. Both representatives have the distinction of leading the first of the open-ended working groups of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion. Though both were new to the assignment when they assumed the post last year, they persevered and continued to engage delegations in dialogue. Their efforts are manifested in the document before us today.

I also wish to use this occasion to record our deep appreciation to the former Chairmen of the Working Group, namely, the Presidents of the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions, and particularly the former Vice-Chairmen, namely, the Permanent Representatives of Sweden and Benin. As all members are aware, the Working Group on an Agenda for Development was established 19 December 1994 by resolution 49/126. Several representatives who helped to conceive and elaborate further the mandate of the Working Group are no longer here at the United Nations. Like us, they would have been happy with the outcome.

Credit and recognition should also be extended to the Secretariat and the officials who, together with the bureau and delegations, have toiled over the years to produce the document before us today. I also wish to convey my special thanks on this occasion to all representatives of the Open-ended Working Group for their arduous and persistent effort in concluding this work. Negotiations were tough, but eventually, over time, consensus was forged through understanding and a spirit of give and take.

The Agenda for Development is timely, as it underlines the United Nations continued catalytic role and active involvement in development matters. It serves as a welcome fillip to the special session on Agenda 21, beginning next Monday. Already the spirit of cooperation that brought about this document has influenced ongoing preparatory efforts for the special session.

Development is today the most important task facing humanity, which continues to be confronted with poverty and other forms of socio-economic problems. While some parts of the world have enjoyed economic growth and sustainable development, many have not. In the last few years, the United Nations has started a process of re-examination and redefinition of development, taking into account the progress achieved in the last half century.

In this context, the Agenda for Development is a tangible attempt to address issues and problems associated with development from a common and collective perspective of the United Nations. The United Nations has a unique opportunity to act now to operationalize the Agenda for Development. It is within the power of Member States and the rest of the global community to help ensure the success of the Agenda.

Development, while requiring international cooperation, is the responsibility of States. It can succeed only if it responds to the needs of the people and if it articulates these needs in a coherent policy framework. The complementarities between national and international contexts and connections cannot be ignored nor looked at in isolation.

Before concluding, I should like to take this opportunity to express the hope of many that the successful conclusion of the Working Group on an Agenda for Development could encourage other working groups to conclude their work successfully and soon. Success in the working groups clearly enhances the image and relevance of the United Nations in the eyes of the people of the world, for whom the United Nations was established.

I give the floor now with great pleasure to Ambassador Percy Mangoaela of Lesotho.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Vice-Chairman, Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development: It is with a sense of unbounded pride that Lesotho has been associated with this most important task of the elaboration of an agenda for development in the character of a Co-Vice-Chairman of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development.

The Agenda has been adopted at a moment in history when we stand on the threshold of a new millennium, which threatens to dazzle us with its technological revolution. The place of small and developing countries in this landscape, in which physical barriers between and among countries are continually being blurred by globalization and information technology advances, is one fraught with uncertainties and fears of marginalization from world trade.

It is therefore gratifying to these countries to be able to draw from the Agenda for Development the conclusion that international cooperation and solidarity is still alive and well in the world. They are emboldened, as developing countries, to expect that they will be empowered by the partnership exemplified in the Agenda for Development to face this uncertain future with greater confidence.

I should like to express my most sincere gratitude to several delegations for the kind words of congratulation they expressed in connection with my small part in the success that is ours all. In my turn, Sir, I should like to thank you for the leadership that you have provided both Ambassador Powles and myself, and for your interventions at very critical stages in the process. When we were about to throw in the towel, you urged us to go on. When our own energy resources were very low, you replenished them.

I would be less than honest if I did not admit that at times, I thought "the game was not worth a candle", and yet we went on because we perceived among the partners in negotiation an accommodating approach to finding a common understanding on some of the most intractable problems and complex issues that were the substance of the negotiations.

I should like to thank in particular the Secretariat for their unstinting effort to make our task easier, from the highest level of the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development to the foot soldiers, the ones who stayed with us until very late hours, continually supplying us with the institutional memory which was so important to sustain the momentum.

While we express relief at having finally attained our objective of an Agenda for Development, we nevertheless do not consider it to be the end of the road. On the contrary, we consider it a platform from which will be launched several initiatives, multilateral and bilateral, to give concrete expression to the lofty ideals contained in the Agenda for Development.

The President: I now give the floor, with equal pleasure, to Ambassador Michael Powles of New Zealand.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand), Vice-Chairman, Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development: The importance of this occasion has been well attested to by you, Sir, and by the many previous speakers this morning. I have just a short footnote which I would wish to add.

Some warm words have been directed to the Vice-Chairmen and that is much appreciated. In fact, I would like to emphasize that the successful result which has been achieved by this Working Group was substantially brought about by the efforts of a small group of representatives in the Working Group itself, none of whom were ambassadors and most of whom are not sitting immediately behind their nameplates this morning. They were determined that we should not fail, and their success demonstrated how much individuals and individual effort really can make a difference in multilateral diplomacy.

I would also like to join those who have recorded their appreciation of the efforts and professional skills of the Secretariat officers assisting us. Ambassador Mangoaela referred to them as the foot soldiers of the Secretariat, and I would simply like to say that the two particular foot soldiers who were with us through our long meetings have been with this whole exercise far longer than any delegations have been. I believe that they have demonstrated the highest skills of professionalism and commitment which could be expected of international civil servants.

Finally, I would certainly hope that, while there is indeed so much more to be done in the development field, this game — to repeat the words used this morning by our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Guyana, and again a moment ago by Ambassador Mangoaela — was certainly "worth the candle".

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 96?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 96.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.104

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

104th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 16 July 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 168 *(continued)*

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/950)

The President: The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" is contained in document A/51/950 and has been distributed in the General Assembly Hall.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to submit to the Assembly today my report "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform".

The reforms I am proposing are bold reforms. They are the most extensive and far-reaching reforms in the 52-year history of our Organization. Their aim is simple: to transform the Organization; to bring greater unity of purpose, greater coherence of efforts and greater agility in responding to an increasingly dynamic and complex world.

The establishment of the United Nations was an act of extraordinary foresight and creativity. Our founders, meeting in the aftermath of the Second World War and at the dawn of the era of colonial liberation, designed an instrument of common progress unique in human history.

In five decades the United Nations proved its worth. In its halls, virtually all nations and all peoples come together to discuss common agendas and to resolve common problems. The victims of aggression and of oppression come to the United Nations in search of justice, redress and relief.

There have been great achievements. Colonialism and apartheid are no more. We have worked to foster, restore and build peace in all corners of the globe. We have moved decisively forward in the promotion of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

We have promoted democracy and international law as the pillars of peaceful relations among States. From air traffic control to the law of the sea, from the use of chemical weapons to the judging of war crimes, we have worked to establish clear norms and practices of international cooperation.

Faith in fundamental human rights has never been stronger. We have championed the advancement of women and brought relief and shelter to refugees. We have fought to ensure that the needs of children — the most vulnerable of all the world's people — come first. Today the world has at its service a United Nations with a proven record of achievement and a Charter of enduring validity.

The need for a common instrument of global service has never been greater. The global agenda has never been so varied, so pressing or so complex. Member States face

97-85858 (E)

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a wide range of new and unprecedented threats and challenges. Many of them transcend borders. They are beyond the power of any single nation to address on its own — any single nation, however powerful.

The United Nations faces, therefore, unprecedented demands and opportunities. That is why an effective and efficient United Nations — a United Nations which is focused, coherent, responsive and cost-effective — is more needed than ever. When Member States turn to us — when they call on us to alleviate suffering and ensure peace — we must be ready.

However, the United Nations is not working as it should. Our Organization is slow to reflect changes in geopolitical realities.

Where we should have been flexible and adaptable, we have all too often been bureaucratic.

Where we should have reached across sectoral lines and institutional boundaries, we have stayed within rigid structures, working in isolation, with little or no coordination.

Where we should have been empowering managers, we have not made optimum use of our resources, either human or financial.

Where we should have been enabling the staff to fulfil their potential, we have shackled them with bureaucracy. We must liberate their skills and their capacities.

Now is the time for reform. The Organization needs it. The Member States of the Organization want it. Indeed, they are showing the way for change at the United Nations by rethinking their practices and adapting their policies, seeking out new efficiencies and value for money.

I was given the honour of being elected Secretary-General after 30 years of service with the United Nations, at Headquarters and in the field. If there is one thing that my experience has taught me, it is that, adequately funded and properly structured, this Organization of ours can and will carry out its mission on behalf of the world's peoples and Governments.

Since taking office, I have vigorously pursued the goal of bringing a culture of reform to the United Nations.

Today we take a momentous step forward. The Assembly now has before it a full, comprehensive programme of measures and recommendations for reforming and renewing the Organization. It encompasses all the reform measures and proposals initiated during my first six months in office. It takes us in many new directions as well. Allow me to review some of the highlights.

For the United Nations to pursue our core objectives, for us to carry out the tasks with which we are entrusted, we must first refine our leadership and our management.

Accordingly, a Senior Management Group will be formed that will function like a cabinet and help lead the process of change.

A Strategic Planning Unit will be established within my office to identify and analyse emerging global issues and trends.

Four Executive Committees, which I established in January to guide the Organization in its principal areas of work, will be strengthened.

I will also recommend to the General Assembly that the post of Deputy Secretary-General be established. A Deputy Secretary-General will assist me in leading this diverse and global Organization. The Deputy Secretary-General will be in charge of the Secretariat during my absence from Headquarters and will spearhead the Organization's efforts to raise funds for development. The Deputy Secretary-General will also ensure the coherence of the Organization's cross-sectoral activities.

The United Nations also needs streamlining. My reforms accomplish this in several ways: by proposing a negative-growth budget — this will be the first time in a generation that there has been negative growth in real terms in the United Nations budget; by eliminating 1,000 posts — with that reduction we will be 25 per cent below the figure of a decade ago; by reducing administrative costs by 33 per cent — these savings will be allocated to development; and by cutting back on documentation — by the end of this year, we will have reduced our use of paper by 30 per cent.

I also want to end the persistent state of near-bankruptcy in which the Organization has been living for far too long. Too many Member States are failing to discharge their treaty obligation to pay their contributions in full, on time and without preconditions. In response, I am proposing that Member States establish a revolving

credit fund, initially capitalized at a level of up to $1 billion through voluntary contributions or any other means that Member States may wish to suggest.

Let me be clear: assuring the Organization's financial viability is not only an essential part of the reform; it is a condition for the very success of reform.

Reform must enhance our ability to promote development and address the root causes of poverty and conflict. The grouping of United Nations funds and programmes engaged in development into a United Nations Development Group will foster consolidation and cooperation amongst them without compromising their distinctiveness or identity. This idea will be carried through to the field level as well, where all United Nations entities will function under one flag in a single United Nations House. I am proud to announce that the first such designation, effective immediately, will apply to the United Nations presence in South Africa.

Let us turn now to the question of financing for development. Put simply, we need more financial resources for development, whether from private-sector or governmental sources. I am therefore creating an Office for Development Financing. Raising such funds requires a concerted and full-time effort.

My report also proposes a "development dividend" in order to shift resources from administration to economic and social activities. Our projections are that at least $200 million could be made available by the year 2002. However, I am proposing that a down-payment be made in January 1998 from savings achieved from the current biennium's budget.

The programme of reform you, the members of the General Assembly, have in your hands will affect virtually every department and every activity of the United Nations. It contains proposals for increasing the speed with which we can deploy peacekeeping and other field operations. It focuses on improving our capacity for peace-building, advancing the disarmament agenda and strengthening the environmental dimension of United Nations activities. It proposes ways to combat the scourge of "uncivil society": criminals, drug pushers and terrorists. It reorients our public information activities so that the world's peoples better understand our goals, our role and our range of activities. It calls for simplified administrative procedures and for a thorough overhaul of human resources policies and practices.

It advocates major restructuring in several areas, including economic and social affairs, human rights and humanitarian affairs. The advancement of human rights needs to be integrated into all principal United Nations activities and programmes. We need to deal more effectively with complex humanitarian emergencies. Accordingly, a new Emergency Relief Coordination Office will be established to replace the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

The natural complement to these proposals would be certain changes of a more fundamental nature, which can be undertaken only by Member States. Several of these changes relate to the General Assembly. I have suggested that the General Assembly refocus its work on issues of highest priority and reduce the length of its sessions. I am proposing that the Assembly enact sunset provisions — specific time limits — for initiatives involving new organizational structures or major commitments of funds.

Perhaps most significantly, I urge the Assembly to consider adopting a new system of budgeting: a shift from input accounting to results-based budgeting. This approach, which many Member States already use at the national level, would give the Secretariat greater flexibility while maintaining strict accountability.

Finally, I have recommended that Member States consider establishing a commission to study the need for fundamental change in the system at large — the specialized agencies which are essential members of the United Nations family.

These are, in broad outline, the reforms that I am submitting for your consideration. I am confident of their soundness, I am convinced of their necessity and I am dedicated to their implementation.

We stand at the threshold of a new beginning for the United Nations.

(*Spoke in French*)

We are truly at the beginning of a new era for the United Nations. Resolved to participate in a new century, capable of adapting to a changing world environment and committed to the eternal values of its founding fathers, the United Nations will be able to realize with dignity the goal it has set itself: the essential pursuit of the common good.

The reforms I am proposing will enable the United Nations to do more, and to do better. They will enable us to seize the new opportunities now before us, and they will enable us to make the world Organization the unchallenged expression of the conscience of humanity in the service of humanity.

(*Spoke in English*)

Our aspiration with this reform plan, simply and immediately, is to transform the conception, quality and delivery of the services we provide. That is what you and the world demand of us. No less do we demand of ourselves. This is my pledge to you, and to the world: that starting today, we begin a quiet revolution in the United Nations.

In return, I ask of you, and of the world, that you judge us not only by the cuts we propose or by the structures we change. Judge us instead, and judge us rightly, by the relief and the refuge that we provide to the poor, the hungry, the sick and the threatened — the peoples of the world whom the United Nations exists to serve.

"The Earth is not ours", an African proverb teaches us; "it is a treasure we hold in trust for future generations". We today must ensure that we are worthy of that trust, and must make the United Nations once again the instrument of its fulfilment. We can and we will lay a new foundation of peace, progress and development.

This is the age of the United Nations. Unfettered by ideological conflict and empowered by technology and global prosperity, we can envision as never before the realization of our noble aims. We owe it to all succeeding generations that this moment of promise become a new beginning for all nations and peoples alike.

There is a light at the end of our century's dark and dangerous tunnel and it is brightened by the hopes and dreams of the world's peoples. The United Nations remains the one true and universal vessel for those dreams. Reinvigorated, reformed and recommitted, it can carry those dreams into the next millennium and make them reality.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): I stand in the name of the African Group, which I have the honour and the privilege to chair for the month of July, to convey our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our Secretary-General for submitting to this Assembly his measures and proposals for the reform the United Nations Organization.

It would, of course, be presumptuous on our part to comment at this time on the substance of the proposals, since we have just heard them. But from what we have heard, we have the distinct impression that the reform programme is indeed far-reaching and wide-ranging. We are particularly impressed that the Secretary-General is able to produce such a package barely six months after assuming his onerous responsibilities.

There is no one in this Assembly who can seriously question the need for reform of the United Nations. Indeed, for some time now, the reform process has become not only part of the daily life of this Organization, but also of ourselves as individuals, whether we are on the side of the Secretariat or on that of the intergovernmental machinery. Five working groups have so far been set up to deal with various aspects of the reform of our Organization. The overall aim is to make the Organization more efficient, relevant and effective; to be able to fulfil better its core principles and purposes of promoting peace and security, economic prosperity, social progress, humanitarian assistance and overall development; and also to deal with current and future challenges as we enter the new millennium. To achieve this, reform must be rooted in consensus on the role of the Organization as envisaged in the Charter and buttressed by agreement on how it should play this role and achieve those goals.

Unfortunately, it appears from the work done so far in the working groups that reform has different connotations for different States or groups of States. The resultant effect is that, apart from failure to make substantial progress in our reform efforts after so many months, we have also increasingly succeeded in generating much tension and mistrust among ourselves. We must endeavour to defuse this situation and focus on the essentials of the exercise, since reform amidst crisis is a sure recipe for failure.

It is within this context that we want to situate the bold and courageous initiatives which our reform-minded Secretary-General, like his predecessor, has undertaken to keep us focused on what we really need to do to restructure, equip and finance the Organization to enable it to do more with less and to obtain value for its money.

Already in March 1997, the Secretary-General had "outdoored" what he referred to as his "Track I" proposals for reform, involving those managerial initiatives and decisions which fall within his authority. We appreciate the fact that he has since taken further

measures to implement most of those proposals in a transparent manner. At the time of presenting his Track I proposals, the Secretary-General also gave an indication that he would unveil, by July 1997, further reform proposals which would incorporate more measures, also within his competence, but which would benefit from consultations with and guidance from Member States; as well as other proposals and recommendations in respect of the more fundamental issues that could only be decided by Governments. In submitting these further proposals today, the Secretary-General has been true to his word and has underscored his commitment to reforming an Organization which we all agree is in need of reform.

The United Nations stands at a crossroads between the end of the cold war and the start of a new era of constructive peace; between the end of a century and the promise and prospects of a new millennium. United Nations reform should therefore serve as a tool to help us cope better with the choices the world community must make at this crucial time. In this connection, we welcome the fact that the Secretary-General's proposals cover the four crucial sectors of United Nations activities: development cooperation; peace and security; economic, social and environmental affairs; and humanitarian activity. We are of the view that such a comprehensive package deserves the most careful study, analysis, reflection and appraisal, at a high political level, with a view to arriving at a consensus that would enable the package to dovetail smoothly into the intergovernmental reform process and hopefully arrest the recent trends to undermine the integrity of the Organization and erode its *raison d'être*.

It is incumbent upon all Member States to respond to the Secretary-General's initiative by providing him with clear and coherent policy guidance in the implementation of the reform proposals. And we propose that this be done timeously in order not to lose the momentum. We are also of the view that the General Assembly should focus on the goal and direction of the reform and avoid any temptation to micro-manage the process.

For us as developing countries, and particularly those of us in Africa, the yardstick for evaluating the reform proposals will be the extent to which the programme satisfies our priorities and concerns for a more secure, prosperous and just world, where the needs of one are the concern of all.

We do not see the reform process as an issue of confrontation between the Secretariat on the one hand and Member States on the other, or between one group of States and another. We see it as an issue of common interest and concern to all mankind. It therefore calls for the exercise of a collective political will backed by adequate, timely and unconditional financial support in a spirit of partnership that is unquestionable. It also calls for the mobilization of support from civil society for the United Nations and its reform efforts.

I thank you, Sir, on behalf of the African Group, for this opportunity to make these preliminary remarks on the Secretary-General's submission. Once again we express our gratitude, appreciation and support for the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to bring us thus far on the vital issue of reform. We look forward to sharing his vision as we work together to build an Organization that truly measures up to the fundamental purposes and principles of its Charter.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia have associated themselves with this statement, as has Liechtenstein.

Allow me at the outset, Sir, to convey our appreciation to you for the action you have taken since the beginning of your term of office and which has led you today to present to the General Assembly these important and wide-ranging proposals for the reform of the United Nations.

The European Union is an enthusiastic supporter of the reform of the United Nations. The difficult but necessary exercise we are embarking upon will allow us to test the credibility and the determination of both the Organization and its Member States regarding their capacity adequately to respond to the questions we are facing in the areas mentioned by the Secretary-General.

In the view of the European Union, the reform process is not about cost-cutting but about enabling the United Nations to play a fully effective role in meeting its obligations and carrying out its tasks. Its objective should be to contribute significantly to giving the United Nations greater unity of purpose and greater flexibility of response. The European Union is fully committed to an exercise that will make our Organization more efficient, more present and more in tune with existing trends in international relations.

A successful reform requires not only rationalization and the streamlining of operations, but also the strengthening of the Organization on the basis of sound and predictable financial resources. If the United Nations is to respond adequately to the challenges of the twenty-first century, the reform process should lead to the building of a world forum that provides effective leadership, and should concurrently make the Organization more efficient, transparent, accountable and reliable.

The United Nations represents, in our view, an important instrument of support for Governments in their development process. The European Union presented a number of ideas and proposals in the economic and social field in October 1996 and in January 1997, and it has actively contributed in the discussions on these issues in the context of the Agenda for Development. We note therefore with appreciation that the proposals by the Secretary-General deal thoroughly with questions pertaining to development, humanitarian activities and human rights. If the United Nations is to function more effectively in these fields, it must strengthen the efficiency of its offices and of its operational framework, give them more coherence and ensure genuine coordination at all levels.

By combining integrated, well-managed and efficient services at the national level with a common programming framework, the Organization will not only enhance its impact on the policies pursued by Governments, but it will also have a greater influence on the agendas and priorities of other actors in the development field.

To be effective, reform will also have to be implemented at the intergovernmental level. Streamlining the United Nations consultative machinery, including through a reinforcement of the Economic and Social Council, is an important element of this reform, which should also be translated at the Secretariat level, which is largely dedicated to serving the intergovernmental process.

The European Union will study carefully the various proposals contained in the document that was submitted to us today. We will offer our substantive comments on the reform proposals during the general debate of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Marc Forné Molné, President of the Government of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Marc Forné Molné, President of the Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. Forné Molné (Andorra) *(spoke in Catalan; English text furnished by the delegation):* When we take the time to analyse the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, we realize that the founding fathers and mothers of the United Nations were very careful to establish a system of sovereign equality of States in the supreme organ of our Organization, the General Assembly. At the same time, they tried to give the Security Council a balance of powers to highlight the importance of existing forces in a world of economic, geographical and political imbalances. Over more than 50 years, some better, some worse, the United Nations has functioned, has grown, has become established and has become an indispensable Organization.

Today its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, responding to the will of Member States to safeguard and strengthen the United Nations, has introduced to us very diligently his proposals for United Nations reform. I can guarantee the Secretary-General that I have listened to his words with avid interest and that I will not fail to bring to him the Andorran contribution in the course of the general debate of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

My goal today is to point out the importance that small States will have — those same States to which in 1945 one was careful to give sovereign and equal voices and voting powers in the General Assembly — in order for the reform process fostered by the Secretary-General since the beginning of his mandate to go forward. At the United Nations, small States are the majority. With us, reform will progress. The biggest and most powerful States must not fear the abundance of the small. If reform were to lead to imbalances in the founding principles of the United Nations, our Organization would cease to be universal, and it would therefore cease in its function as the flag of the future. Without the big States, reform is not possible. Without the small States the reform will be half a reform.

At the practical level, the contribution of small States deserves to be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, small States, generally, in spite of their presence everywhere, have a tendency to concentrate their efforts at the United Nations in particular areas in which they become experts. Andorra, for example, proposed to the Group of Western European and other

States that it computerize its archives, a task that our Mission to the United Nations, with the help of the National Centre for Informatics, is carrying out right now. These efforts at computerization fit very well into the goals of immediate managerial changes that the Secretary-General proposed as a first phase on March 17 of this year. We also salute the efforts of the Ambassador of Pakistan for increased computerization of the United Nations.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Secretary-General, on your proposals of 17 March for immediate managerial change, to reduce the budget and administrative costs, to integrate at the level of countries, to establish a code of conduct and to reorient the Department of Public Information, among others. Your efforts to divulge the works of the United Nations will foster an enthusiasm at the base of world population that will guarantee the success of the reform, which deserves all the recognition of the international community.

Today the Secretary-General has introduced to us the second phase for the reform of the United Nations, which is closely linked to the question of development. Last 3 July in Geneva, Mr. Kofi Annan defined development as a pillar of peace, a foundation of stability and a powerful force for preventive diplomacy and preventive action. Andorra believes that this human development will not take place without youth. The reform of the United Nations must bring our Organization close to youth, so that it becomes involved in taking advantage of the efficiency dividends that are the fruit of the same process. My country pointed this out at the Social Summit in 1995 with the introduction of a specific commitment in the Copenhagen Declaration; in New York during all these years; in Vienna at the closing session of the World Youth Forum, attended by our Ambassador in December 1996; and at the Earth summit last month in this same Hall. It is fair that I do so again today.

The Secretary-General states that reform is a process, not an event. In this process he will be able to count on Andorra. In this process he will be helped by small States. This process will have to have the backing of youth if it is to be durable, global and true.

The President: I thank the President of the Government of the Principality of Andorra for this statement.

Mr. Marc Forné Molné, President of the Government of the Principality of Andorra, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. Mungra (Suriname): It is indeed an honour for me, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, to acknowledge and express appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his staff in preparing the document entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform", which was presented earlier in this meeting by the Secretary-General.

We will forward the document launched this morning to our respective capitals for its consideration and thorough study. We expect preliminary comments to be presented in the course of the general debate of the forthcoming fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his presentation of the report containing his proposals for the second phase of reforms. This offers all of us an excellent opportunity to continue the dialogue on the reform process, which began when Mr. Kofi Annan first assumed his duties as Secretary-General. We expect the dialogue to continue in a spirit of partnership and cooperation between the Secretariat and the Member States.

As expected, the report turned out to be rather voluminous, and for obvious reasons I have not yet had an opportunity to read it. It covers a broad spectrum of issues, many of which have substantive importance for the future of the United Nations. We note the greater focus on tasks in the spheres of peace-building, socio-economic development, ensuring human rights and crime prevention. The humanitarian sector is becoming one of the cornerstones of the new United Nations, and it is important to preserve and develop the active capability that has been built up here in the short time since the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The importance of multilateral disarmament questions is growing, and the United Nations is called upon to foster more actively the resolution of such questions while taking all factors into account.

It is clear that an in-depth, comprehensive analysis, both in New York Missions and in capitals, is necessary. The success of reforms will depend on the extent to which their specific components and orientation are supported by the Member States. We expect the reforms

to make the Organization more mobile and capable of responding quickly, and the answer will not be simply, as in the past, the establishment of new structures and managerial posts.

It is also clear that no reforms can strengthen the United Nations if all Member States do not recognize their international obligations vis-à-vis the Organization and if they do not fulfil them unconditionally.

It is our understanding that after the Member States study the report and determine their positions, an appropriate mechanism for the practical consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals will be set up.

At that time, we will give a more detailed response to the report. We are prepared, jointly with all other delegations and with our Secretariat colleagues, to advance the nascent reforms in the interest and for the benefit of all. Our common responsibility is to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations as it faces the challenges of today's world. We hope that this report will give rise to dialogue and cooperation towards achieving these goals.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): This brief statement is delivered on behalf of Canada and Australia, as well as of New Zealand.

In the coming weeks we will carefully study the proposals which have been put before us this morning. Our considered views will be presented by our respective ministers at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

At this stage, Canada, Australia and New Zealand would like to join others in warmly welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations. While many of the measures announced today must ultimately be approved by the Member States, the Secretary-General is uniquely placed to invigorate our discussions with new ideas and fresh insights.

We believe that bold and innovative measures are needed to prepare the Organization for the twenty-first century. Our Governments are concerned to see a more effective and more efficient United Nations. We wish to see better, more targeted programmes. There is a need to redistribute resources to priority areas and away from administration and lower priorities. We are not interested in mere cost-cutting and we most emphatically disagree with suggestions which would leave the United Nations with a diminished role in the world.

We believe that the initial reforms presented to us in February and March, and today's second-track proposals, open a critical window of opportunity for the Organization to seriously address long-overdue reforms, particularly significant problems in the economic and social sectors and management reform. We hope that this package will deliver the concrete changes necessary to revive and enhance the perception of the United Nations in the global system.

Such reform will not be painless, as we know from our own experiences, but without it the United Nations will risk sliding into increasing irrelevance. We are determined therefore to support necessary reforms, and to that end have each already sought to contribute enthusiastically and constructively to the reform process. As the Secretary-General himself has said, reform is a process, not an event. The package of proposals before us will lay the foundation for further measures in the future.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand believe that the Secretary-General's package must not be split up for consideration and possible dismemberment by different bodies or organs of the United Nations. We support, therefore, consideration of the entire package by the General Assembly in plenary meeting at the fifty-second session, and for the General Assembly to decide on follow-up action and implementation in plenary meeting.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand have high expectations of this reform process.

It is fitting, Mr. President, that these proposals have been introduced at this time, given the commitment and effort which you have devoted to the United Nations during your tenure of office. We are committed to the goal of a more effective, relevant and influential United Nations.

Mr. Bjørn Lian (Norway): The Secretary-General has just presented us with a report that contains wide-ranging and bold proposals for reform of the United Nations, indeed for what he called a "quiet revolution". While we will come back with further comments after careful study, I wish today to warmly welcome this new, important initiative for renewal of this Organization.

Allow me to recall that the Nordic countries earlier this year presented a comprehensive report suggesting reform of the economic and social areas of cooperation in the United Nations. This, of course, is an area of key importance to the developing world. We are therefore pleased that the Secretary-General is building on and taking further the proposals in his first reform package, of March this year. These are important steps which will allow us to achieve even greater impact for United Nations operational activities.

It augurs well for our overall efforts to reform the United Nations that the General Assembly's Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System achieved consensus a few days ago on a large number of measures for reform of the General Assembly and the Secretariat.

The Secretary-General's report and the report of the Working Group are mutually supportive, and I am convinced that taken together they will enable the United Nations to take decisive steps to strengthen the organization. That is what Member States and the United Nations have now demonstrated that they want.

In presenting his comprehensive reform proposals today, the Secretary-General, only six months into his term of office, has shown genuine leadership. It is now up to us, the Member States, to give him the support he so clearly deserves.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The members of the Asian Group listened with interest to the Secretary-General's introduction and summary presentation of his proposed reform package, set out in document A/51/950 under agenda item 168, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals". We appreciate his courtesy in making this introduction.

You may rest assured, Mr. President, that the States members of the Asian Group will give the report of the Secretary-General due attention by forwarding it to their respective capitals for careful consideration, study and analysis, in the hope that during the general debate at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly this autumn individual delegations and groups will be able to articulate their respective positions on the report.

Mr. Owada (Japan): I should like on behalf of the delegation of Japan to join previous speakers in expressing our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for personally presenting his plan for a comprehensive and overarching package of United Nations reforms.

Japan attaches great importance to the reform of the United Nations in the recognition that the Organization must adapt to the new international situation as we look forward to the twenty-first century. We believe it is necessary to promote reforms in a balanced way in the areas of peace and security and development, as well as in the administrative and financial areas, so as to ensure that the United Nations can discharge its responsibilities in a more effective, relevant and efficient manner.

Indeed, whether or not the Organization can play an effective role in the years ahead will depend on the success of our reform effort. My delegation deeply appreciates the leadership and commitment to reform that the Secretary-General has shown in this regard and hopes that today's announcement on reforms will generate greater momentum in the overall process of United Nations reforms.

The Secretary-General's reform programmes and proposals that are presented to us today touch upon a wide range of United Nations endeavours which require our careful scrutiny. Once we have studied them in detail, my delegation looks forward to participating in the forthcoming deliberations on them. At this time, I should like to present some preliminary remarks based on the presentation the Secretary-General offered today.

In the areas of peace and security, my delegation welcomes the emphasis which the Secretary-General places on strengthening the role of the United Nations in providing global services to international peace and security, such as the rapid reaction capability of peacekeeping operations, as well as on preventive action and post-conflict peace-building.

With regard to economic and social development, we are gratified to note that the Secretary-General is focusing attention on development issues as one of the most important areas of the United Nations endeavour and hope that the United Nations will further contribute to the promotion of the new development strategy based upon global partnership.

Japan has been promoting the concept of reinvestment of savings -- that is, the reallocation of savings to development programmes -- and thus my delegation strongly supports the Secretary-General's proposal in this regard. Moreover, we agree with the

thrust of the Secretary-General's reform efforts to further integrate the activities of the various funds and programmes, both at Headquarters and at the field level.

As has often been pointed out, if the United Nations is to respond promptly and effectively to the grave humanitarian crises that have been arising with increasing frequency in recent years, greater coordination among its various humanitarian assistance activities is essential. From this point of view, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen coordination among humanitarian assistance activities. As for the concrete measures that he has proposed, Japan would like to study the proposal in detail.

As I indicated at the outset, my delegation intends to examine carefully the reform proposals presented today, together with the 1998-1999 revised budget estimates, which will be forthcoming in the near future. My delegation is ready to actively participate in the discussion from the viewpoint of how these proposals, presented in the form of a comprehensive reform package, will contribute to the common goal of ours: the goal of strengthening the functions of the United Nations, revitalizing its activities and achieving a cost-effective United Nations.

Mr. Bohaievs'ky (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General and his team of reformers who prepared the report with the proposals for the second track of the United Nations reform.

The United Nations remains an irreplaceable institution. This is the reason why we have greeted with appreciation and encouragement all attempts to enhance its efficiency and update the Organization's structures. The recent successful completion of the work of the Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System and the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development is an important event in the life of the United Nations that will have a positive impact on its deliberations.

The same magnitude, in the view of our delegation, is reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, presented today for our attention and consideration. As we understand it, this document requires a comprehensive and thorough analysis with a view to achieving broad support for its elements.

Being committed to the idea of adapting the United Nations to the new realities and challenges of today's world, Ukraine is prepared, as always, to make its instrumental contribution to the future process of reforms in this world Organization. We can succeed if all of us are guided by reason, political will, determination and a consensus approach in our efforts to see a new and more efficient United Nations.

In due time, Ukraine will have an opportunity to present in detail its assessment of the substance of the Secretary-General's report. At this moment, we wish to support the views that a discussion of the report should be the substance of the general debate of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): When the Secretary-General announced his initial reform blueprint in March, my delegation welcomed it wholeheartedly. Today, we are very pleased to see the Secretary-General's carefully considered Track II proposals introduced in the General Assembly. Of course, having received the full report only today, like other delegations we will need to examine the details carefully.

In making these proposals, the Secretary-General has taken a very significant step towards the kind of structural reform that will enable the United Nations of today and the future to do more for the world's people, to do it better and to do it for less. We commend him for his initiatives thus far and pledge our full support to making the process of reform at the United Nations an effective one.

We are fully aware that the Secretary-General cannot achieve all of the proposed reforms alone. Many central elements of the proposal require action by all of the Member States to be implemented. Both the Secretariat and the Member States share joint responsibility for the direction of the reform process as a whole. Cooperation will be crucial if efforts to strengthen the United Nations are to bear fruit.

In this connection, my delegation proposes that we seize the opportunity today to make a firm statement of our collective resolve to continue down the reform path. I urge the General Assembly to take action on this very day on President Razali's proposal to establish an ad hoc committee of the whole to consider the Secretary-General's proposals. The committee of the whole

represents the next logical step in the continuing process of reform.

Today's announcements are tangible expressions of the culture of reform that has been vigorously developing here at the United Nations and in Member States over the past few years. Let us make it a priority to build on this good start today by working together for an Organization that can better serve all of our people in the years ahead.

The President: As President of the General Assembly, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for providing us with his report. The report contains qualitative and extensive reform measures and proposals that are designed to enable our Organization to meet the challenges ahead. I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General and his staff and the Executive Coordinator for Reform for presenting this report within six months of the Secretary-General's tenure in office.

When you assumed office, Mr. Secretary-General, we spoke of building an enduring partnership within the membership and the Secretariat. In that context, we spoke of working closely to make the United Nations remain relevant to the needs of the peoples of the world. Today you have made specific proposals to this Organization underlining greater unity of purpose, greater coherence and a greater ability to deliver. You have also challenged the Member State to do their share so that together we can revitalize the Organization to achieve the purposes outlined in the Charter. I wish to use this occasion to appeal to all Member States seriously to study these proposals so that we can ensure that the United Nations will be fully equipped and prepared to meet the challenges ahead. I hope that in studying these proposals, Member States will keep an open mind. As we all know, it is easy to criticize, but much more difficult to be constructive. These are important proposals which I hope will not fall casualty to stereotyped processes. Above all, the proposals, I hope, will not prove to be casualties to tussles to benefit only one or two groups.

The United Nations must undergo change, but the changes that it must undergo must benefit all — all of the Governments, not just some Governments — and more importantly, they must benefit the peoples of the world, as promised in the Charter. Only through change of this fashion can we all serve our collective needs and truly call the United Nations a universal House.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 168.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.105

General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

Official Records

105th plenary meeting
Thursday, 31 July 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statement by the President

The President: As President of the General Assembly, I must express my shock and horror over the deaths and injuries as a result of the bombing in Jerusalem. Our hearts must go to the bereaved and we extend our deepest condolences. Our times are too often punctuated with violence and acts of extremism and desperation. We need to reach out for peace and reconciliation.

Agenda item 37 (*continued*)

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/935)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.77/Rev.1)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/956)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1.

Mr. Escovar-Salom (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Haiti, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1 to the Assembly. Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain and Sweden have been added to the list of sponsors.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution pays tribute to the Haitian people in their ongoing quest for a strong and lasting democracy, justice and economic prosperity. It supports the continuing leadership of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States in the efforts of the international community in furthering political progress in Haiti.

It also welcomes the continued efforts by States to provide humanitarian assistance and technical cooperation to the people of Haiti and fully supports the contribution of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH), its Executive Director and staff, and of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti in the establishment of a climate of freedom and tolerance propitious to the full observance of human rights and the full restoration of the constitutional democracy of Haiti.

In its operative part, the draft resolution welcomes the recommendation of the Secretary-General contained in his report of 26 June 1997 to renew the mandate of the joint participation of the United Nations with the Organization of American States in the International Civilian Mission to Haiti and decides to authorize the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations component of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti until 31 December 1997.

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

It also reaffirms once again the commitment of the international community to continue its technical, economic and financial cooperation with Haiti in support of its economic and social development efforts and in order to strengthen Haitian institutions responsible for dispensing justice and guaranteeing democracy, respect for human rights, political stability and economic development.

At a time in which the precarious political, social and economic situation is an additional burden for the recently created institutions that are the foundation of the state of law, the continued presence of MICIVIH continues to be decisive in the consolidation of democracy. That is why we trust that, in adopting this draft resolution, we will be helping Haiti to move forward in future under its own steam.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): As we meet to consider agenda item 37 on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, I wish on behalf of the Government and people of Haiti to reiterate our thanks to the General Assembly for the interest it has always shown in this question and our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts on behalf of the state of law in Haiti.

In his report A/51/935 of 26 June 1997, the Secretary-General takes stock of the human rights situation in Haiti, assesses the functioning of the judicial machinery and prisons, and describes activities undertaken to promote and strengthen institutions. It is a chiaroscuro that stresses the progress and the deficiencies of the democratic process in Haiti, the complexity and difficulties of which were certainly underestimated.

My Government appreciates the report's emphasis on the considerable results achieved in the efforts to guarantee respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms throughout the country. Thus, in a fragile political and socio-economic situation, the people has continued largely to enjoy its civil and political rights. Freedom of speech is guaranteed and citizens may express their opinions freely and without fear. The press conveys all sorts of ideas without any censorship whatsoever. No one is persecuted or threatened for his or her political convictions.

In the area of justice, efforts have been made to improve the functioning of the judicial machinery, which remains infected by incompetence and the corruption of certain judges. An entire programme sustained by the international community is under way in order to reform the judiciary. Similarly, specific measures adopted in the penal system have allowed tangible improvements to be made in the treatment of detainees.

In the area of the National Police, we should also emphasize the ongoing progress in both its organization and its methods of work. Thanks to the assistance of United Nations personnel and friendly countries, its training continues in a satisfactory way. It is ready to begin its work and its ability to guarantee order and security in a democratic context will be severely tested. We must nevertheless deplore certain lapses which, having been brought to the attention of the authorities, have been investigated and their perpetrators punished.

As will be noted, democracy and respect for human rights are gaining ground in Haiti. The primacy of law over force is gradually becoming embedded in our habits. Outmoded structures and mentalities are in full retreat. Given our past of dictatorship, these results are not negligible.

I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the members of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH), a small but carefully targeted Mission and an irrefutable example of successful cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States, whose assistance has been essential to the promotion of democracy and human rights in Haiti. I wish in particular to mention the Mission's Executive Director, Mr. Colin Granderson, who, through his courage, selflessness and objectivity, has won the confidence and admiration of civil society in my country.

The Secretary-General has clearly indicated in his report that the progress achieved would not have been possible without the contribution of MICIVIH and that Haiti still needs this assistance.

We are convinced that the General Assembly will continue to support our efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and to guarantee greater respect for human rights by unanimously adopting the draft resolution now before it.

I cannot conclude without once again expressing our gratitude to the member countries of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on the question of Haiti, as well as to all the countries that sponsored this resolution.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the

European Union on the question of the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti. Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia have aligned themselves with this statement. Iceland and Norway also associate themselves with it.

Since the establishment of a democratic regime in Haiti, the European Union has actively participated in the international community's efforts to create the necessary conditions for strengthening democracy and respect for human rights in the country.

For this reason, we note with concern that the Secretary-General's report states that the political situation in Haiti has deteriorated, that the economy is stagnating and that this situation is engendering a profound sense of insecurity in the country.

The European Union has also taken note of the postponement *sine die* of the second round of partial elections, announced on 12 June 1997, and of the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rosny Smarth, on 9 June 1997. The Union welcomes the recent appointment of a new Prime Minister, Mr. Eric Pierre.

Concerned by the climate in which the electoral process has taken place, the European Union expresses its firm hope that the Haitian people will be able as soon as possible to express its will in free, honest and transparent elections, held in accordance with rules and procedures accepted by all, in which citizens have the widest possible range of options and choices.

At this critical moment, the presence of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) remains crucial to the consolidation of democracy in the country. MICIVIH has contributed in large measure to the establishment of the rule of law in Haiti, through human rights monitoring, the provision of technical assistance to the Government, the promotion of democratic values and support for the consolidation of institutions in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Haiti.

One of the major tasks of MICIVIH is the monitoring of respect for human rights. The Secretary-General's report states that although the population has continued in large measure to enjoy individual rights and fundamental freedoms, the situation with regard to respect for human rights remains fragile. In particular, the police force, which is new and rather inexperienced, has not yet done all it should to improve its human rights record.

The absence of a strategy and programme for judicial reform has thus far blocked the development of institutions and the real protection of human rights, and this in turn has compromised the development of police and prison institutions.

The European Union hopes that the new Commission on the reform of law and justice, whose creation it financed, will encourage the preparation of a draft text on judicial reform and the strengthening of institutions in this sector.

The European Union reaffirms its determination to continue its support for the strengthening of the rule of law and economic and social development in Haiti.

Between October 1994 and the end of 1996, the European Community, through the European Commission, contributed 310 million ECUs towards that end. Since then, other funds have been made available, in particular through the national indicative programme, signed in April 1997, which provides for an additional contribution of 148 million ECUs. The Community has undertaken to increase its efforts to provide aid for the judicial system and for judicial reform.

At a time when the precarious nature of the political, social and economic climate is exerting increasing pressure on the foundations of the key institutions on which respect for the rule of law depend, it is more necessary than ever that the international community continue and step up its assistance, and contribute, by its presence, to consolidating democratic institutions in Haiti.

For this reason, the European Union supports the Secretary-General's recommendation, set out in the draft resolution before us, to extend the mandate of the United Nations component of MICIVIH until 31 December 1997. The 15 member States of the Union have co-sponsored the draft resolution.

Mr. Hynes (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): I am pleased to take the floor today in support of draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1. We hope that the Assembly will adopt this draft resolution by consensus.

We are meeting to debate this agenda item today first and foremost to highlight the continued progress in Haiti towards the consolidation of a peaceful and democratic society in which full respect for the rule of law and fundamental human rights prevail. The

Secretary-General notes in his most recent report that, despite the sometimes troubled political situation in Haiti, individual rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be widely enjoyed.

We welcome this assessment and the important change in Haitian society that it signals. The Haitian National Police (HNP) is one of the most important State actors in this regard, and their continued professionalization is one of the underpinnings of the generally positive trend described by the Secretary-General. We hope that the National Police can continue to register significant improvements and becomes an effective and fully functioning police force.

(*spoke in English*)

We are also meeting today to renew the mandate of the United Nations component of the joint United Nations/Organization of American States (OAS) International Civilian Mission in Haiti. Last December, the Government of Haiti sought a one-year renewal of this component. However, for financial reasons, the General Assembly was unable to fulfil that request, and therefore renewed the Mission only until the end of July. Therefore, we are now seeking to fully satisfy the terms of the request made by President Préval and to extend the Mission until the end of this year.

The joint Civilian Mission continues to carry out invaluable work. We pay tribute to the dedication of its Executive Director, Mr. Colin Granderson, and to the United Nations and OAS staff for their able assistance to the Government of Haiti in the areas of institution-building and human rights monitoring, education and promotion and, particularly in recent weeks, electoral expertise and assistance.

While the joint Mission is engaged in a broad range of activities, one aspect of its mandate — support for efforts towards judicial reform — is coming to assume ever greater significance. This is particularly true as the police become more effective in the prevention and investigation of crimes. The Secretary-General emphasized this aspect of the Mission's mandate in his report. We welcome the steps taken by the Government of Haiti to set priorities in the area of judicial reform, and we are pleased to observe that the international community is already engaged in providing considerable support to the Haitian authorities in this domain.

In sum, we believe that the joint Civilian Mission in Haiti continues to play a vital role in supporting the Haitian authorities as they effect a remarkable transition towards democracy and stability, and we hope that the international community will continue in its significant support of their efforts.

Mr. Legal (France) (*interpretation from French*): Today the General Assembly is being called upon to extend the mandate of the International Civilian Mission in Haiti to 31 December 1997.

At the end of last year, financial considerations led the General Assembly to decide to extend the mandate of the Civilian Mission only through the first seven months of 1997. That decision nevertheless left open the possibility of adopting another resolution to extend the mandate.

Considerable progress has been achieved in Haiti in the field of respect for individual rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as in the formation of a police force that respects the rule of law. The International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH) is making a substantial contribution, particularly in strengthening institutions and education in the field of human rights. The Civilian Mission also plays an important role in assisting efforts to professionalize the National Police, complementing the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH), which will be succeeded by the United Nations Transition Mission instituted yesterday by the Security Council.

This progress should be pursued in order to consolidate democratic transition. As emphasized by the Secretary-General in his report of 26 June, it is still necessary to maintain MICIVIH in a climate which, despite what has been accomplished, remains precarious in certain respects.

France participated, as part of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General for Haiti, in preparing the draft resolution before the Assembly. We provide assistance to Haiti in efforts to establish the rule of law and fully support the statement made by Luxembourg as President of the European Union. We hope that the draft resolution on this subject will once again receive the unanimous support of the General Assembly.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States has supported the efforts of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH) since its inception. Last November President Préval asked that

the international community keep MICIVIH in Haiti through December 1997. In June our Mission to the Organization of American States (OAS) joined the other nations of our hemisphere in extending the OAS component of MICIVIH through the end of this year. We are proud to renew our support for the joint efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in building a more democratic, just and prosperous Haiti.

As the Secretary-General's report makes clear, we must not close our eyes to the obstacles we face. The efforts of the international community have come against a backdrop of divergent opinions within Haiti over the course and pace of political and economic change. Among the issues the Haitian Government must resolve are the imperfect elections of 6 April, the approval of a new Prime Minister and the impasse over second-round elections.

The Haitian National Police has faced strikes, demonstrations and surging crime. Overall, the police has dealt competently with the challenges it has faced. But at times it has not lived up to the trust placed in it by the Haitian people. Incidents of excessive use of force, fatal shootings by police, arbitrary arrests and prolonged pre-trial detentions have continued at troubling levels this year.

Despite these problems, we should not ignore the dramatic strides forward since the restoration of democracy. The Haitian National Police continues to make progress. Administrative and operational improvements have made the force more effective in fighting crime. Police agents and *commissaires* who violate the trust given to them have been dismissed. Training by MICIVIH, the civilian police element of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti, the United States and other donors has put the force on the right track. Let us keep in mind that the Haitian people enjoy the best police force in their nation's history.

As an impartial monitor of the human rights situation in Haiti, MICIVIH encourages respect for the fundamental freedoms of the Haitian people. Through its technical assistance programmes, MICIVIH has made impressive strides in bringing the rule of law and an effective justice system to Haiti. Equally important, the Mission has worked tirelessly to promote democratic values through classes, seminars and conferences that have reached over 6,000 ordinary Haitians.

MICIVIH plays a crucial role in the consolidation of democracy. By extending its mandate, we will send a clear signal to the people of Haiti that we stand with them in their efforts to create a tolerant, just and democratic society.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the countries of Central America in my capacity as Chairman of the Central American Integration System.

I wish briefly, on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, to state that we fully share in welcoming the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report that the joint participation of the United Nations with the Organization of American States in the International Civilian Mission to Haiti should be continued.

We trust that the General Assembly, in keeping with that recommendation, will unanimously authorize the renewal of the United Nations component of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti until 31 December 1997, in accordance with the mandate and modalities of the Mission's operations.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1.

In connection with the report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1, which is contained in document A/51/956, I call on the Acting Chairman of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Syed Rafiqul Alom, of Bangladesh.

Mr. Alom (Bangladesh), Acting Chairman of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour to make the following statement at the request of the Fifth Committee in connection with the General Assembly's consideration of the report of the Committee, issued in document A/51/956, on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/51/L.77, under the agenda item entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", which has now been revised as document A/51/L.77/Rev.1.

The Fifth Committee noted that the mandate of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH) would extend for one month beyond the mandate envisaged for the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti and that

the administrative backstopping for MICIVIH for the month of December may need to be reviewed.

The President: I thank the Acting Chairman of the Fifth Committee for his statement.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1, the following countries have become sponsors: Austria, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ireland and Jamaica.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/51/L.77/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 51/196 B).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 37.

Agenda item 40 (*continued*)

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/51/917, A/51/936)

Draft resolutions (A/51/L.75, A/51/L.76)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolutions A/51/L.75 and A/51/L.76.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am honoured, first of all, to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.75 on behalf of the sponsors. In addition to the countries listed in the draft document, which are the Group of Friends of the Guatemala peace process, the following Member States have sponsored the draft resolution: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Portugal, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sweden and Uruguay.

As the Assembly can see, in the preambular part the text recalls the resolution which extended the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala. The draft resolution welcomes the timely implementation of the Agreement on the Definitive Ceasefire.

In the operative part of the draft resolution the Assembly welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/936), takes note with satisfaction of the progress made so far in the implementation of the peace accords and commends the Government of Guatemala, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca and the Guatemalan people, institutions and organizations for their participation in the implementation process. It encourages the parties and all sectors of the Guatemalan society to join efforts for the implementation of the accords. In particular, the draft refers to the second phase of the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements.

Upon reiterating its full support for the comprehensive agenda of democratic, equitable and multicultural development, the Assembly invites the international community to continue cooperating in the establishment of most favourable conditions for the realization of the agenda. Finally, the Assembly requests the Secretary-General to keep it fully informed on the implementation process in the light of the present resolution.

We would like to place on record our gratitude to the Secretary-General, the Secretariat team and the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala for their constant and valuable support for the peace process.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are encouraged by the progress achieved so far, through desire and commitment, along the path of peace. We trust that the parties, and Guatemalan society in general, will continue to make the aims of peace, development and reconciliation their priority. This will require the full and timely implementation of all the commitments undertaken. The sponsors invite the Assembly to adopt this draft resolution unanimously and thereby reaffirm its commitment to working with the people of Guatemala and to supporting them in the peace process.

Let me now turn to draft resolution A/51/L.76, entitled "El Salvador". In addition to the countries that appear on the document, I am honoured also to speak on behalf of the following sponsors: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El

Salvador, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Russian Federation, Sweden and Uruguay.

As the Assembly can see, in the preambular part the text refers to resolution 51/199, which established how the responsibilities of verification and good offices entrusted to the United Nations in recent times should be carried out. The Assembly, having considered the report of the Secretary-General, pays tribute to the efforts made by the people of El Salvador to achieve the general objectives of the peace process. It also pays tribute to the contribution made by various United Nations missions and personnel to the peace process and verification. The preambular part also welcomes the progress made in the past five years and acknowledges with gratitude the contributions of Member States to that progress.

In the operative part of the text the Assembly welcomes the continuing commitment of the Government and people of El Salvador to the consolidation of the peace process and urges all concerned to continue working together to complete the implementation of the peace process without delay. The Assembly decides that the support unit for the envoy in El Salvador should be closed down as a separate entity. At the same time, it welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General to assign two international professionals and two local consultants as a unit under the administrative structure of the United Nations Development Programme for a period of six months, funded by the Trust Fund for the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador, to follow up on the outstanding elements of the peace accords, while the verification and good offices responsibilities would continue to be carried out from New York.

The draft resolution emphasizes the importance of the continued cooperation of the various agencies, offices and programmes of the United Nations system and of the political, technical and financial support of Member States. Lastly, it requests the Secretary-General to keep the Assembly informed of further developments in the peace process as he deems appropriate.

The sponsors are convinced that El Salvador is on the threshold of a new chapter in its history. The foundations have been laid and the conditions exist to enable it to move towards a future of peace, freedom, democracy and development. We trust that the appropriate measures will be taken in El Salvador to complete the outstanding elements of the measures agreed upon without delay.

Today, the General Assembly can be satisfied at the progress made and proud of the work of the United Nations in El Salvador. For this reason, the sponsors recommend that the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.76 be adopted unanimously.

Argentina has also become a sponsor of the two draft resolutions that I have just had the honour to introduce.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union on the subject of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala and the peace process in El Salvador. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia have aligned themselves with this statement, as has Iceland.

The member States of the Union are sponsors of the two draft resolutions before us.

As regards Guatemala, the European Union welcomes the progress made so far in the implementation of the peace agreements signed by the Guatemalan Government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG).

The first phase of the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements, which principally concerns the ceasefire and demobilization of members of the URNG, has been carried out successfully. The entry into force of the second phase now confronts the Government, the URNG and Guatemalan society at large with a major challenge.

The European Union pays tribute to the determination and commitment displayed by all parties to join together in building a democratic society in Guatemala based on the rule of law. It is critical for all sectors of Guatemalan society to identify themselves with the peace process and to benefit from it. They must combine their efforts to implement all aspects of the second phase of the Timetable Agreement.

The European Union would, however, like to raise a certain number of points that it considers give cause for concern. First, there is the human rights situation. Although definite progress has been made in this area, violations of human rights are still too frequent. In this context, the European Union welcomes the fact that the

Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that Have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer, established by the Oslo Agreement of June 1994, is now preparing to start its work. It is only by facing up to its past that the country will be able to begin the necessary process of reconciliation and national reconstruction.

Secondly, we are concerned about institutional weakness, because the creation of solid institutions is an important prerequisite for the success of the peace process. The European Union accordingly supports unreservedly MINUGUA activities aimed at strengthening Guatemala's institutions; those activities focus most particularly on the legal system, public security, and the promotion of a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic State, on education and promotion regarding the peace agreements and their dissemination, and on the creation of a national climate conducive to respect for human rights.

The European Union wishes again to express its appreciation of the positive way in which the United Nations has contributed to the Guatemala peace process by supporting the parties and encouraging them to bring about a firm and lasting peace and to work towards national reconciliation, so that the foundations of democracy and development may be laid in a climate of justice and freedom. The support and cooperation of the international community are essential in this connection, even though the viability of the planned changes depends above all on a sustained effort at the national level.

In recent years the European Union has made available substantial resources for the promotion of peace, democracy and more equitable development in Guatemala. Nearly half of the aid that the European Community has so far given to Guatemala — 270 million ECU — has been applied to areas covered by the peace plan.

At last January's meeting of the Consultative Group for Guatemala, the European Community also undertook to support the peace agreements by offering an additional prospective contribution of 200 million ECU. That package will be applied mainly to the following sectors: strengthening the administration of justice, support for the establishment of a national land registry, contribution to the formation of a national civilian police force, support for the enhancement of tax-raising capacity, strengthening of municipal authorities and aid for the demobilization and resettlement of members of the URNG and of the army.

The Union expresses its support for the Arzu Government's efforts to advance the consolidation of peace and the formation of a more democratic and pluralistic society in Guatemala.

As regards El Salvador, the European Union welcomes the fact that the peace process there has maintained its momentum and has produced conditions that will permit the progressive consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. The European Union endorses the specific and urgent recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/917), which are essential to the democratization of the country.

We also note that implementation of the peace agreements is incomplete in certain areas. Further reforms are required in the field of public security, in particular as regards the institutional development of the National Civil Police and the National Public Security Academy, institutions to which the European Union gives technical and financial aid. Additional efforts must be made also to reform the electoral system. It is regrettable that the recommendations made by the inter-party Commission, which was responsible for the reform, were not implemented in time to have an effect on the legislative and municipal elections in March 1997. Implementation of electoral reform is imperative, particularly during the run-up to the presidential elections to be held in 1999.

Although tensions remain, the European Union welcomes the major advances that have been made in the field of human rights, in particular the reduction in the number of arbitrary or politically-motivated executions. The Union attaches particular importance to the office of the National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights, which must continue to be consolidated so as to become an institution of national scope: efficient, professional and independent. It is thus vital that this office receive the budgetary resources it needs to carry out its task.

Progress on the path towards the restoration and consolidation of peace in El Salvador has been in large measure dependent on the presence of the United Nations, which has been responsible for verifying the full implementation of the peace agreements in recent years: the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador, the United Nations Office of Verification in El Salvador and, finally, the support unit of the Secretary-General's envoy, whose term of office just ended at the end of June 1997.

In view of the advanced stage of implementation of the peace agreements, the European Union supports the Secretary-General's recommendation set out in the draft resolution before us today, proposing the establishment, under the administrative umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme and for a period of six months, of a service comprising two international Professionals and two local consultants, which would be responsible for monitoring the full implementation of those elements of the peace agreements which have not yet been put into effect.

We are convinced that the participation of the international community, through the presence of the United Nations and the very constructive work of the Group of Friends of El Salvador, will make a positive contribution to the completion of the peace process in El Salvador.

Mr. Holter (Norway): As a member of the Group of Friends, Norway welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the peace accords in Guatemala during the first six months since the final peace agreement was signed. It is particularly encouraging that the demobilization went smoothly and according to schedule. On 3 January, Norway signed an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to make available $3.6 million for the crucial task of the demobilization, return and reintegration of combatants. There is every reason to commend the Government of Guatemala, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) and the United Nations for the successful completion of the demobilization process.

We also note with satisfaction that the Commission set up by the Oslo Agreement of June 1994 to investigate human rights violations during the conflict is now taking up its work. Norway will contribute $1 million to the work of this Commission. In total, Norwegian assistance to Guatemala this year is likely to reach approximately $20 million.

Norway continues to support the work of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala, to which we attach the greatest importance. The Verification Mission now covers an important range of questions directly linked to the implementation of the peace accords. Human rights constitute a crucial element, and the human rights situation remains a cause for concern.

The implementation of all the elements of the peace accords and the development of a society that can meet the aspirations of the people of Guatemala represent serious challenges which will require great efforts by the Government of Guatemala and all sectors of Guatemalan society. This will also require the continued support of the international community. It is now of vital importance that the dynamics and the momentum of the process be maintained so that necessary reforms still pending can be carried out. As a member of the Group of Friends, Norway remains committed to supporting the process.

During the more than five years that have passed since the signing of the Chapultepec Agreements, we have witnessed a fruitful process of peace-building in El Salvador — a process in which the role of the United Nations has been of paramount importance. As a means to consolidate this process, Norway has supported and contributed to the United Nations presence in El Salvador and continues to participate in the training of the National Civil Police force. Parts of the Chapultepec Agreements are, however, still not implemented. It is of great importance that the necessary electoral reforms be carried out well before the next presidential elections, in 1999.

Considering that some form of international presence in El Salvador is still required, Norway supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish for a period of six months a small unit within the administrative framework of the United Nations Development Programme, reporting to the Department of Political Affairs, to follow up on outstanding elements of the peace accords. We welcome the suggestion that this staff be financed by funds remaining in the Trust Fund for the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador, to which Norway has made substantial contributions.

Mr. Laclaustra (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The representative of Luxembourg spoke in this debate on behalf of the European Union. My delegation associates itself fully with his statement. I wish nevertheless to make some additional comments, as Spain is a member of the Group of Friends of the peace processes in El Salvador and Guatemala.

We trust that the General Assembly will adopt today by consensus two important draft resolutions that it is considering under agenda item 40 of its current session, entitled "The situation in Central America". They are both important because they mark a crucial phase for two Central American countries that have left behind years of savage internal conflict in order to establish themselves

as examples of peace and harmony and to face the challenges of the future in a climate of freedom and democracy.

First of all, draft resolution A/51/L.76 closes down the support unit for the envoy of the Secretary-General as a separate entity, as it concluded its mandate on 30 June. It also welcomes the proposal of the Secretary-General to assign two international officials and two local consultants to a unit under the administrative structure of the United Nations Development Programme for a period of six months, in order to follow up on the outstanding elements of the peace accords. Under this plan, the United Nations responsibilities of verification and good offices would continue to be carried out from the Headquarters of the Organization.

This arrangement seems to us very sound, in the light of the report of the Secretary-General of 1 July 1997, which underscores the need to maintain follow-up in the coming months with respect to the implementation of the outstanding elements of the peace agreements, particularly those in the socio-economic area. The fact that this arrangement was arrived at attests to the tremendous achievements in El Salvador during the last few years. The assessment of the Secretary-General in his report is very positive in recognizing the extraordinary transformation of the country.

A new stage in the history of the Salvadoran people will now begin, one full of hopes and challenges now that the consolidation of achievements is in their hands. The various political and social forces of the country, as well as the Government and institutions, should keep this aspiration alive and pursue further the reforms already begun in important sectors, such as the administration of justice and public security. These will guarantee the development of democracy in a state of law.

The entire international community will continue to accompany El Salvador in consolidating the country's development. This is attested to by the various technical-assistance and institutional-strengthening projects of the agencies of the United Nations, particularly those of the United Nations Development Programme, and the various bilateral programmes of a number of several countries. The people of El Salvador can be sure that Spain will be at their side in this collective effort.

The General Assembly is also preparing to adopt today draft resolution A/51/L.75 on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), in order to launch the second phase of the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements signed by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, until 31 December 1997, in the light of the report of the Secretary-General of 30 June. In doing this the General Assembly wishes to underscore the importance it attaches to this phase, in which it will be necessary to build upon the measures taken in the first 90 days since the signature of the Peace Agreements and to begin their active implementation.

To its great satisfaction, the international community has seen that the firm commitment to peace displayed by the parties during the negotiating process is a constant, as has been widely demonstrated during the first phase of the implementation of the Peace Agreements. The verification of the Agreement on the Definitive Ceasefire — which was successfully carried out by the military contingent attached to MINUGUA through Security Council resolution 1094 (1997) — sets the standard that should prevail in the implementation of the remaining Agreements.

The international community is following closely the consolidation of the peace process in Guatemala and will continue to cooperate in establishing the most favourable conditions to that end. In this respect, Spain is proud to take an active role in supporting and assisting the people of Guatemala.

The constitutional, fiscal and agrarian reforms that will have to be carried out in the next few months will require a constant effort on the part of the country's political forces. They should demonstrate their readiness to be flexible and to compromise in order to achieve legislative measures that will meet the needs indicated in the various Peace Agreements. In the framework of cooperation, MINUGUA continues to carry out important activities in institution-building, as the Secretary-General points out in his report. These are aimed particularly at the justice system, public security, the promotion of a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic State, as well as at education, the promotion and dissemination of the Peace Agreements and the attainment of a culture of respect for human rights.

Guatemala stands today at a crucial moment in its history, when all society must endorse the results attained by the parties to the Peace Agreements by implementing those Agreements daily. This is an arduous and difficult task because in many cases the rewards are neither

immediate nor tangible. Democracy-building is the task of every citizen.

In the words of a Spanish poet,

"Traveller, there is no road, the road is made in travelling".

For Guatemala the road is marked out in the Peace Agreements, and it is incumbent upon all the social and political forces, the Government, the institutions and all the people to travel it in solidarity.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Brazil takes particular satisfaction today in speaking under agenda item 40. We have received news from throughout the world indicating the persistence or resumption of conflicts. Elsewhere, we see signs that support for the Organization's activities is vacillating. That is why we regard the situation in Central America as a positive and encouraging contrast.

The fraternal countries of Central America have gone through tumultuous times, especially in the last phase of the cold war in the 1980s, when they were enmeshed in a web of conflicting external interferences. When the time came, the other nations of Latin America did not fail in their duty to do everything in their power to succour the fraternal republics of Central America. First the Contadora Group, then the Support Group, the Rio Group and the Organization of American States — under the leadership of its Secretary-General of the time, Mr. Baena Soares, and today under Secretary-General César Gaviria — extend their good offices.

The crucial factor, however, in the achievement of progress towards peace and democracy following the Esquipulas Agreements was the resolute action of the nations of the Central American region themselves. At the appropriate moment, the United Nations made an essential contribution by helping to consolidate peace and to lay the groundwork for the future of prosperity, freedom and justice that certainly awaits Central America.

Today, the Central American nations, like the others of Latin America, are devoted as a priority to resolving their social problems, moving towards development and making headway in economic integration.

We are pleased to observe the progress made in the fulfilment of the recent historic peace agreements between the Government and the URNG in Guatemala. Moreover, the elections held last month in El Salvador represent an important step forward in consolidating the renascent Salvadoran democracy. The decisions of the nineteenth summit of the Central American Heads of State, concluded on 12 July in Panama, attest to the constructive work of all the nations of the isthmus.

The people of Brazil was proud of the participation of its military observers and police officers in the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador and its successor, the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador. To date, nationals of my country are still contributing to the continued success of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).

For all these reasons, Brazil is a sponsor of draft resolutions A/51/L.75 on MINUGUA and A/51/L.76 on El Salvador. Despite the progress that has been achieved, we do not believe that the international community's support to the Central American nations should be interrupted. We should continue to respond to the aspirations of those countries.

The external intervention, clandestine arms supplies, battles and waves of refugees may be things of the past, but serious problems inherited from that past persist. Today, when the possibilities for success are greater, we have the opportunity to help El Salvador and Guatemala to consolidate peace and prepare for development.

Many of the basic questions facing the Salvadoran and Guatemalan nations are domestic in nature and only those peoples themselves, in the framework of their institutions, will be able to find permanent solutions to them. But the cooperation and international interest should be maintained at this decisive phase in order to address events in those two nations. Brazil, for its part, is committed to continue extending a hand of friendship and solidarity to Central America. Its success will be the success of all Latin America and of the United Nations.

Today, the General Assembly has considered another agenda item of special interest to the international community and to Latin America in particular. The resolutions adopted today by the General Assembly and yesterday by the Security Council on Haiti reflect the continued assistance of the United Nations in establishing political stability and development in Haiti, in cooperation with the Organization of American States and in accordance with the request of the Haitian Government.

Brazil conveys its best wishes to the people of Haiti and hopes that it will quickly find the path of reconciliation, democracy and progress.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/51/L.75, the following countries have become sponsors of that draft resolution: the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Paraguay.

The following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/51/L.76: the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Paraguay.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/51/L.75 and A/51/L.76.

The Assembly will first take up draft resolution A/51/L.75, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala." May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.75?

Draft resolution A/51/L.75 was adopted (resolution 51/198 C).

The President: The Assembly will now take up draft resolution A/51/L.76, entitled "El Salvador". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.76?

Draft resolution A/51/L.76 was adopted (resolution 51/199 B).

The President: I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to explain their positions on the two resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Government of Guatemala is earnestly committed to making the sustained national effort required to ensure that a strong and lasting peace in the region is successfully concluded.

The statements made by speakers before the General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution on the United Nations Verification Mission placed in their proper context the tremendous efforts of the people and Government of Guatemala to ensure that the peace process is fully implemented. These efforts have been rewarded by those statements and by the references in the Secretary-General's report to the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights, the Agreement on Resettlement of the Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict and the Agreement on the Establishment of a Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that Have Caused the Guatemalan Population to Suffer.

I take great pleasure in informing the Assembly that the Commission, appointed on 22 February, is being established this very day. Its members are the Guatemalan Commissioners Mrs. Otilia Lux de Coti and Mr. Edgar Alfredo Balselles Tojo; its Chairman is Mr. Christian Tomuschat.

The report notes with satisfaction the Agreement on Social and Economic Aspects and the Agrarian Situation, the Agreement on the Strengthening of Civilian Power and on the Role of the Armed Forces in a Democratic Society, the Agreement on Constitutional Reforms and the Electoral Regime and the Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, among others.

On behalf of the Government and people of Guatemala, I wish to express thanks for the emphasis which the Secretary-General's report places on international cooperation. This acknowledgment serves as a reward for and recognition of not only my country's efforts, but also the great efforts of the Mission and its members in Guatemala.

The resolution that has been adopted today by the General Assembly, in commending the Government, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, and the people, institutions and organizations of Guatemala for their participation in the implementation process, has endorsed the international community's constant and valuable support for the peace process in Central America.

In addition to expressing once again my thanks for the statements made by the speaker who introduced the draft and by the other speakers on this item today, I wish also to thank the co-sponsors of this resolution.

My country is committed to seeing this successful United Nations Mission continue until we can see the full success to which we all aspire.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of El Salvador, I take pleasure in expressing our thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the assessment of the peace process in El Salvador contained in document A/51/917, dated 1 July 1997, which was prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/199 of 17 December 1996.

More than five years after the signing of the peace agreements in Mexico, on 16 January 1992, we are pleased and satisfied to note that the peace process in El Salvador has received a favourable evaluation, based on the level of implementation of the general objectives and commitments agreed upon by the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), particularly with respect to the military, public security, human rights, the administration of justice, and electoral and socio-economic issues, among others. These achievements have produced tremendous changes in my country, as the Secretary-General's report notes.

In this respect, certain issues of particularly far-reaching importance should be mentioned, such as the demilitarization of the country, the integration of the FMLN into civilian life and the national political process, greater political openness, and the existence of a climate of tolerance reflected in the most recent elections, in March 1997.

The work towards national reconciliation and the implementation of the socio-economic agreements continues to make progress. Mechanisms for defending human rights are being strengthened, and the civilian police force is increasingly professional. In short, I believe we are on the right track towards a progressive consolidation of the democratic process that will respond to the desires and aspirations of the people of El Salvador.

However, we recognize that there are still matters that have yet to be implemented. These are small matters, yes, but real ones. My Government is committed to implementing them in accordance with the commitments and obligations it has undertaken.

It must be added that there are still structural elements we must struggle against, as an underdeveloped nation. With respect to the responsibility of the Government, we must state that we approve of the Secretary-General's proposal to terminate the functions of his Special Envoy's support unit and to end its mandate. But we welcome the designation of two international professionals and two local consultants to follow up on outstanding elements in the implementation of the commitments that were undertaken.

It has been a very long road, but we are close to the conclusion of an historic chapter in which the United Nations and the international community played an important role in ending the armed conflict in El Salvador and ensuring its transition towards peace and democracy. That process received support and backing from the international community, in particular from the Friends of the Secretary-General for the peace process in El Salvador and from the donor community, whose economic, technical and financial assistance gave vital additional support to the peace process and to the consolidation of institutions in order to avoid any backing down from the results already achieved.

I would like to pay a particular tribute to the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, and to the men and women who served in the various missions that took part in the verification process in El Salvador. We reaffirm once again our deepest gratitude for the generous support given to El Salvador, which has enabled us to change and move forward democratically.

We know we have a great deal left to do, but the Government of El Salvador is firmly resolved to forge ahead and serve as a model of democracy and of equitable and sustainable development.

With respect to draft resolution A/51/L.76, which was introduced by Mexico and co-sponsored by the Friends of the peace process in El Salvador, as well as by my Government, and which includes the Secretary-General's proposal, we are gratified to note that it was adopted unanimously, without a vote.

We would like to emphasize, as other speakers already have, that we share the view of the Secretary-General on the importance of international cooperation, both multilateral and bilateral, to ensure that the efforts of the Government and people of El Salvador are carried out on a solid basis and can rely on sufficient resources to enable them to continue promoting peace, democracy, freedom and development in El Salvador.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 40.

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System (A/51/24)

Draft resolution (A/51/24, para. 15)

The President: The report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System has been circulated in document A/51/24, which contains a draft resolution in paragraph 15.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Cyprus, who have aligned themselves with this statement. Iceland also associates itself with this statement.

Over the past few weeks it has been stated many times that reform of the United Nations is not an event, but a process.

The High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System has been a factor in this process. When the Group was set up in September 1995, the Member States emphasized their determination

> "to strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system ... in order to realize the full potential of the Organization ... and to respond more effectively to the needs and aspirations of the Member States" (*resolution 49/252, second preambular paragraph*).

With that in mind, the European Union has actively participated in the work of the Group over the last two years. Several of its members have also contributed substantially to the trust fund which was established to assist the Group in its work.

After long and intensive negotiations, we now have a document containing a number of proposals that we regard as very useful and that will bring practical improvements to the Organization and make the work of the General Assembly and the Secretariat of the United Nations more efficient.

On the other hand, this document contains little in the way of innovative ideas or grand plans for the reform and strengthening of the system. Thus, the document does not entirely do justice to the Group's mandate

> "to specify ... ideas and proposals ... that it concludes are appropriate for the purpose of revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system". (*resolution 49/252, para. 2*)

The European Union would not wish these comments to be taken as criticism of the exemplary work of the Vice-Chairmen, but rather as a signal for the continuation of the process.

If we wish to bring to a successful conclusion the difficult but necessary exercise in which we are engaged, under the direction of the Secretary-General, we must shoulder our share of responsibility so that together we can give our Organization the new impetus it needs and prepare it for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The European Union will support the adoption of the draft resolution before us, contained in the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, and welcomes the conclusion of the Group's work.

We wish, finally, to express our appreciation and gratitude for the way in which you, Mr. President, and the three Vice-Chairmen — Ambassador Prakash Shah of India, Ambassador Biørn Lian of Norway and Ambassador Colin Keating of New Zealand — conducted the Working Group's proceedings. Without the commitment and leadership of these men, it would not have been possible for us to successfully complete the task entrusted to us in resolution 49/252.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first to express to you my sincere congratulations, Mr. President, on the manner in which you led the work of the important High-level Working Group. I also wish to congratulate the Vice-Chairmen of the Group, Ambassador Prakash Shah of India, Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway and Ambassador Colin Keating of New Zealand. They, together with you, Sir, played a very important role in conducting the work of the Working Group, the search for consensus and the preparation of this important report.

The work carried out by the Bureau was arduous and complicated because of the nature of the issues dealt with and their importance. In that respect, I believe they have achieved a work of far-reaching importance for the reform process.

In our view, one important conclusion to be drawn from this process is that, above and beyond the substance of the debate, a positive message is being sent to society, peoples and Governments, indicating that the United Nations does not consider itself immune to self-criticism and self-evaluation. The document recently prepared by the Secretary-General on an agenda for reform is one more example of the integrated vision that the Organization needs in restructuring the system. We trust that that document will be discussed in depth at the next session of the General Assembly.

As regards the report contained in document A/51/24, we believe valuable contributions have been made to the organization of the work of the Assembly, in particular through the recommendations relating to the work of the Secretary-General and the staff as a whole.

The Assembly needs to set priorities and avoid debates lacking in substance. It needs to focus on managing the agenda in order to add real value to its work. At the same time, within the context of setting priorities in the Assembly, it would be unacceptable to see attempts to undermine the budgetary autonomy of its subsidiary political bodies, such as the Decolonization Committee, through decisions that, while clearly well-intentioned, are unfounded and have been taken without consultation.

With respect to the chapter on the Secretary-General, we welcome the conclusions reached, especially those on reducing bureaucracy and staff appraisal. In this respect, it is important not to discourage people from careers in international civil service and, at the same time, to strive for the highest level of performance.

Equitable geographic distribution is necessary. I would venture to say that the Latin American and Caribbean region should expand its representation in the main areas. The present situation needs improvement, and we must take advantage of the impetus given by the reform process.

It would also be beneficial to define modalities for possible interaction between non-governmental organizations and civil society and the United Nations system. We know that the Secretary-General has new and bold ideas in this regard.

In conclusion, we hope that these matters will be considered as early as possible in a flexible manner, taking into account that new realities call for new approaches and that the democratic nature of the Organization must be enhanced.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): It is my pleasure to welcome the final report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System here in the General Assembly. The United States delegation has placed great value on the deliberations of the Working Group, and I am pleased to see that this work has borne fruit today.

First of all, I would like to personally thank the Working Group's Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Biørn Lian of Norway and Ambassador Shah of India. Their excellent leadership and personal diligence were a great asset to the Working Group.

We join many delegations in regretting Ambassador Shah's departure from New York. We will miss his personal commitment to strengthening the United Nations. Happily, though, Ambassador Biørn Lian will still be with us here in the city, and for that we are all grateful. Finally, we must also recall the valuable contribution of Ambassador Colin Keating of New Zealand to the early stages of our deliberations.

The Working Group's report is a comprehensive review of the functioning of the General Assembly and Secretariat, perhaps the most far-ranging ever undertaken by Member States. Its more than 100 recommendations represent a very constructive means of making tangible improvements to the United Nations.

Although obtaining consensus among all Working Group members was at times difficult, I think that all delegations have benefited from the process of listening to, and taking into account, the considered opinion of others. The consensus underlying this report is of special importance because it indicates a fundamental commitment by all Member States to the ongoing process of reforming and strengthening the United Nations system.

This document and the Secretary-General's Track II reform proposals announced this month together highlight a welcome and invigorating reform culture that has truly taken hold throughout the United Nations, from the Member States to component parts of the system and the Secretariat. My Government will continue to stress the

significance of sustaining the momentum that has developed in this regard and will follow it closely to ensure that we all see our ideas and our efforts transformed into measurable results.

Indeed, there is a strong affinity between the Secretary-General's reform proposals and those made by our Working Group today. It is my hope that these two developments will together drive the reform process further along. My delegation looks forward to the rapid implementation of the measures proposed by the Working Group, in the same way that it advocates an expeditious but thorough consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals in the General Assembly in the fall.

But this occasion is an opportune moment for us to remember our purpose. As we forge ahead in attempts to improve the Organization, we should reflect soberly on the principles that should and should not motivate our reform efforts.

Reform of the United Nations is not primarily about paperwork or process. It is not about reshuffling the chairs or arbitrarily lopping off limbs and organs from the institution for the sake of a neater organization chart. Nor should our ends be driven solely by the balance sheet, essential as financial concerns are to all Governments and people.

To the people of the world, the United Nations is about cherished human values — about peace and security, human rights and humanitarian relief, international justice and sustainable development. This body is a forum to advance global cooperation and understanding and to promote higher norms towards these ends. And, when all is said and done, the United Nations is a repository of humankind's highest hopes and aspirations to build a better world today and for future generations. As we proceed to improve this institution, these fundamentals should be our guiding lights. Let us not lose sight of them in our desire for change or bury them in the imperative to pile up reform proposals.

United Nations reforms should be what we, the Member States, within given means, want the Organization to do, to be and to represent, and how we want our work in pursuit of its mandate to be regarded by the people to whom we are accountable. In what we do to improve the United Nations there must be a proper fit between form and function. What remains after we are done must be capable of performing our core activities. It must serve us better than what we had before. If not, if all our labours amount to nothing more than reaffirming the status quo, or a needlessly debilitated or dysfunctional Organization, then we will not have done our jobs properly and we will have done a disservice to the world. Thus my delegation believes, as we have stated consistently, that a more streamlined, better-focused, smoother- running United Nations will be more effective and efficient in achieving its mandate and priorities. In carrying out the reforms before us, therefore, we should protect and preserve what is truly essential, rather than what is merely encrusted or only convenient. In this way, we may find the way to meet the dual challenge of accomplishing more and doing it with less.

Once again, I commend the success of the Working Group and offer my delegation's full support for the report under consideration.

Mr. Borda (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me to express the satisfaction of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China at the fact that we are about to adopt the draft resolution contained in paragraph 15 of document A/51/24, because it represents broad-based consensus achieved after lengthy and in-depth consideration and debates in the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. The Joint Coordinating Committee was an active and enthusiastic participant in that process.

The draft resolution contains important decisions on reforming the General Assembly and the Secretariat which undoubtedly will contribute to an Organization with, in the first place, a General Assembly strengthened in its character as the highest political organ, in which all Member States participate on an equal footing, which is what gives it its true democratic character.

The decisions to examine the reports of other main organs, particularly the Security Council, deserve to be singled out as an important step towards renewed interaction between the Assembly and the Council. The decisions concerning the organization of the general debate and the work of the Assembly in general will encourage greater flexibility and efficiency in a framework of greater transparency and participation of Member States, at the same time as the length of the general debate and statements in the Main Committees will be reduced, thus freeing up valuable time for substantive debate and negotiations.

The Joint Coordinating Committee hopes that the function of the President of the General Assembly will also be strengthened to advance the purposes and principles of the Organization, including through regular consultations between the President and the presidents of other organs, particularly the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and greater support for the Office of the President on the part of the Secretariat.

The Joint Coordinating Committee is convinced that the agreements reached concerning the Secretariat, in particular the oversight and accountability mechanisms and areas for intensive work by oversight machinery, will also make more flexible and transparent the assessments of the fulfilment of mandates given by intergovernmental machinery to the Secretariat. Other decisions relating to the Secretariat and its staff will also result in a more participatory, efficient and independent Organization, as far as the Secretariat is concerned.

However, it is regrettable that in the time available the Working Group failed to reach agreement on certain other issues before it, including the use of the veto in selecting the Secretary-General and the use of personnel on loan. The General Assembly will have to continue to debate these issues wherever and whenever it sees fit.

There can be no doubt that the adoption of the draft resolution before us now is a very significant step in the reform process to which the Organization has committed itself. Our considerations and debates in the last two years in the Working Group should be kept very much in mind when the Assembly considers the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/950), also known as Track II, presented on 16 July 1997 because some of the proposals in it have already been widely discussed in the Working Group — discussions that may be able to make a substantive contribution to how we analyse the report.

The Joint Coordination Committee is thus able to endorse the adoption of this draft resolution, and looks forward to its prompt and complete implementation beginning in January 1998.

I wish finally to convey the gratitude of the JCC to you, Sir, for your leadership as Chairman of the Working Group, and to the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Prakash Shah of India and Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway, for the manner in which guided the work of the Group to a successful conclusion. Our thanks go also to Ambassador Colin Keating of New Zealand, who served as a Vice-Chairman of the Group last year with exemplary diplomatic professionalism and efficiency.

The countries members of the Joint Coordination Committee that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77 and China will follow with great attention the implementation of the provisions of the draft resolution on which the General Assembly is about to take action.

Mr. Gorelik (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation wishes at the outset to express its deep gratitude to you, Sir, and to the Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, Ambassadors Biørn Lian, Shah and Keating, for the efforts that led to a successful outcome of the Group's work: the report now before the General Assembly.

We all remember the intensive discussions surrounding the work of the Working Group. It is good that, despite its very broad mandate, the Group was able to focus on some of the most important items, including those relating to rationalizing the work of the General Assembly and of the Secretariat, with a particular emphasis on improved overall efficiency. The report of the Working Group sets out a number of specific measures to improve the functioning of the entire multifaceted United Nations machinery, from the process for the appointment of the Secretary-General to the use of computers, from the independence of the Secretariat to the agenda of the General Assembly. Some of these recommendations are innovative.

The delegation of the Russian Federation will support the draft resolution contained in paragraph 15 of the report. While it is important to adopt the draft resolution, it is even more important actually to implement the proposals to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations activities, proposals that were formulated after lengthy discussion: the results of the Group's work must not remain merely in paper form. It is our hope that the breadth and specificity of the proposed measures will make a real contribution to reform of the Organization.

We note the complementary nature of the report of this Working Group and the July proposals made by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General's recommendations develop and reflect many of the ideas and proposals considered by the Working Group, including ideas that are set out in the report and ideas

that were omitted. We therefore believe that it is important, as we carefully consider the measures proposed by the Secretary-General, not to forget about or give scant attention to the fruit of the Working Group's labours.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I should like to express my delegation's support for the draft resolution contained in the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. We are pleased to welcome the successful conclusion of the work of the Working Group.

Over the past two years, Member States, through the Working Group, have discussed a wide range of issues to fulfil the important mandate given by the General Assembly to streamline and consolidate the entire workings of the United Nations system. We recognize that, while the Working Group succeeded in agreeing on a number of specific issues, there remain items on which consensus was not reached; these have been left for future work.

However, most important, in the process of the discussion of the Working Group, Member States were able to find common views on many points, and deepening mutual understanding of the future role of the United Nations. My delegation attaches particularly great importance to the two assumptions on the basis of which the Working Group proceeded, as reflected in paragraph 2 of the annex to the report. The first is that adequate and predictable resources will be provided to support the United Nations system, without which any recommendation would be difficult to implement. The second assumption is that the resources that will be released as a result of the reforms will be allocated to high-priority activities, such as development. My delegation attaches great importance to this concept of the reinvestment of savings in development, in order to distribute the reform dividend.

We hope that the results of the Working Group, together with the proposals the Secretary-General made last week, will contribute to giving impetus to deliberations on reform of the United Nations as a whole during the next session of the General Assembly.

Finally, I should like to express my delegation's deep gratitude to the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Razali, who presided over the work of the Group as its Chairman. We are also grateful to the Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Shah and Ambassador Biørn Lian, who succeeded Ambassador Keating, for their tireless efforts, which made it possible to bring the work of the Group to a successful conclusion.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution contained in paragraph 15 of the report of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, document A/51/24.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/241).

The President: I wish to record my deep appreciation to Ambassador Prakash Shah of India and Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway, Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, for successfully steering the Working Group to a productive outcome. Both of them, with the support of the Assembly and of the Secretariat, have worked tirelessly to ensure that this Working Group, established in 1995, would complete its work. I also wish to convey my deep appreciation to Ambassador Ahmad Kamal for chairing the Sub-group on Non-governmental Organizations.

Tomorrow, 1 August 1997, Ambassador Prakash Shah retires from the Indian Foreign Service. It is fitting that he should mark his last day in office with the adoption of this report.

As we recognize those who have contributed to the success of the Working Group, I must acknowledge the role played by the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire and President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, Mr. Amara Essy, after whom the Working Group is affectionately nicknamed; the President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral; and the former Vice-Chairman, Ambassador Colin Keating of New Zealand. I must also recall here the contributions of Ambassador David Birenbaum of the United States and of Ambassador Sreenivasan of India, both of whom had a role in the establishment of the Group in 1995.

With this report, this is the second Working Group of the General Assembly to complete its work, having been preceded by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on An Agenda for Development. While the outcome of this Working Group

cannot be termed earth-shattering, it certainly contains specific measures to improve the workings of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the Secretariat. The general debate has been formally reduced from three to two weeks. The President, Vice-Presidents and Chairmen of the Main Committees are to be elected early so as to enable the new session to begin its substantive session in earnest.

Important decisions have also been taken on a number of issues, including the following: the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization; the budget process and the fulfilment of mandates; technology; oversight and accountability of the Secretariat: external and internal mechanisms; the process of selection of the Secretary-General and matters pertaining to senior management; and the independence of the Secretariat. All these decisions take effect on 1 January 1998 and should contribute towards our goal of making the United Nations efficient and effective in discharging the mandates given to it.

Without downplaying the importance of these decisions, we must at the same time recognize that this Working Group was not able to achieve consensus on the following key issues: the use of loan personnel; the question of establishing the post of Deputy-Secretary-General; public information; the term of office of the Secretary-General; in-depth review and rationalization of the subsidiary bodies; and the participation of non-governmental organizations. The Sub-group on Non-governmental Organizations, after holding 10 formal meetings, was not able to agree on the mandate.

Many of these issues were raised by the Secretary-General in his report of 16 July, and I have no doubt that Member States will seriously consider these and other issues as we embark collectively on the exercise to ensure that the United Nations remains relevant to the needs of the peoples of the world.

In the end, no delegation expressed any reservation about the contents of the report or its draft resolution. This is a considerable achievement, especially in the light of the widespread scepticism that greeted the establishment of the Working Group less than two years ago. Though no delegation achieved all that it wanted in the give-and-take negotiations, all Member States should feel a sense of satisfaction that a consensus has been achieved on such a wide range of issues of importance to the functioning of the General Assembly and the Organization.

The process of consensus-building was long and hard, and several key matters remain for further deliberations by other groups in the future, but the bottom line is that the multilateral process worked. The Members of the General Assembly, through an open-ended and transparent process, have demonstrated a willingness to reconsider their working methods and their relationship to the Secretariat and other principal organs. The Working Group has not reached any startling or radical conclusions, but it has produced a solid and sensible package of measures that constitute a sturdy foundation on which to build, step by step, in the coming years.

Finally, I would also like to point out here that in resolution 48/264, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the General Assembly decided

> "to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled 'Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly'". *(resolution 48/264, para. 14)*

Indeed, the Secretariat has reflected this decision in agenda item 21, on page 5 of document A/52/150, dated 18 July 1997, which is entitled "Provisional agenda of the fifty-second regular session of the General Assembly". Clearly, delegations need to decide what to do with this agenda item when considering action on the Secretary-General's two-track proposals.

The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 48.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.